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Enchantment and the Mechanical:

**An Autoethnographic Inquiry into Leadership framed
within a Cosmic and Ecological Story**

Jane Riddiford - Participant Code M00375366

Thesis Submission – October 1st, 2016

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Abstract

What difference would it make writing and sharing autoethnographic stories that locate self within the context of ecology and evolutionary cosmology? How might it change the way I understood my role as a leader of an environmental education charity? Would it help me to step into, let go of and share power? Through this inquiry I have recognised myself as being indigenous to the Cosmos; an identity which I maintain provides context and foundation for collaborative leadership. It is an identity that liberates inherited and often unconscious views of the universe as a machine of separate parts into a living story which endlessly reveals the dynamics of an integrated whole.

As a fifth-generation, Pākehā, (New Zealander of European descent¹) working in a multicultural setting in the centre of London, I needed to understand two fundamental and seemingly opposing forces that motivate me. One is the opportunistic and single minded drive of the pioneer and the other is a pull to deeper values of connection and wholeness. What shaped my values? Excavating the past made me curious about the shadow colonialism has cast upon the present. I noticed my ambivalence towards the word 'leadership' despite being in leadership roles for many years. I paid attention to discomfort in the face of difference and discord. Recognising fractures within a culture built on Arcadian idealism held clues to limited notions of leadership that influenced my behaviour.

The Three Baskets of Knowledge, drawn from Māori mythology, helped me find ground beneath the fault lines of the past. Listening to the land and looking back into the depths of time I drew meaning and direction from an ancient and emerging story. Within the 14-billion year account of our origins that science is now revealing, I came home to my own story. I identified with what I consider to be a contemporary form of indigeneity; cosmic indigeneity. I came to welcome non-idealised ways of being and the unpredictable nature of life itself. I learnt to embrace a process of leadership that is fluid and changing, sometimes singular and often collaborative.

¹ King 1985, p.194

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Introduction

The ground under our feet reveals the creative and connective impulses of how all of life came to be. Evolution and ecology are written everywhere, even in the concrete terrain of the construction site where much of my work is based. Land-based experiences evoke a different sensibility in me; my pace slows, I trust, I connect and I embrace the rhythm of change. As I was growing up, and still now, I take myself into wild places and almost intentionally try to get lost. Gravity pulls me to the hidden land, which is both still and moving; it reminds me that all things are distinct but not separate; the intertwining growth of grass underfoot, the sound of a solo bird, the sky. Land provides a doorway to the story of the universe.

Context

Dear Reader,

This thesis is an autoethnographic study into the development of collaborative leadership. Contrasting stories drawn from a colonial heritage with what I call 'being indigenous to the cosmos' helped me shift the underpinning narrative for leadership from control to a more participatory way of being. I show how collaborative leadership arises from inquiry that is informed by a unified way of being, revealed through different ways of knowing.

Twelve years ago I co-founded Global Generation, a non-profit organisation that has provided the platform for this inquiry. Our home base is a movable garden which began by planting a series of skips (dumpsters). The Skip Garden, as it is known, is situated in King's Cross, central London; an area of sixty seven acres of former railway land which is now one of the most extensive urban development sites in Europe, where large companies like Google have their headquarters.² We have involved young people who live in the surrounding area in creating this new part of the city. Together we have planted the paved areas and the tops of buildings with food gardens and created habitats for wildlife. Cosmic and ecological processes support community building between the young people and corporate partners with whom we collaborate. Our projects involve local children and young people, businesses and families, combining activities such as supporting bees, urban food-

² The Guardian – <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/12/regeneration-kings-cross-can-other-developers-repeat-trick> 12.10.2014.

growing, carpentry, cooking and eating together along with dialogue, storytelling, creative writing, photography, film, silence and stillness. We have found that experiences that open a bigger perspective on who we are and what we are a part of, including the enormous history of the earth, the inheritance of cultural history and our role in creating the future, build shared purpose, relationships and community.

I am a fifth generation New Zealander. My forebears, on both sides of the family, purchased considerable amounts of Māori land. They cleared native forest, fenced and farmed the land.



Figure 1: Project Flyer created by Global Generation Youth Programmes Manager Rachel Solomon

My inquiry is situated in the places where Global Generation operates and also in the places in New Zealand where I spent much of my childhood. The main characters in the story are four generations of my family and my Global Generation colleagues including my

husband Rod Sugden, a primary school teacher who works with us one day a week. Three interwoven story-lines shape this inquiry.

- Leadership: The story of a woman who has grown towards a more collaborative style of leadership.
- Colonialism: The story of how the shadow of the past affects the present.
- Evolutionary Cosmology: Stories about how cosmology and ecology can positively shape the underpinning narrative of leadership.

Locating the Inquiry

Even though I had run organisations for 15 years and leadership in one form or another had been occurring, I had difficulty applying the word 'leader' to myself and consequently I had no intention of focusing my research on leadership. As this is a practice-based study, I began writing about my experiences with my colleagues and the young people involved in Global Generation. My supervisor repeatedly commented on the fact that the words 'leader' and 'leadership' didn't appear in my writing. I became curious. What was the back story to my aversion to the word 'leader'? Looking back at a paper I wrote to obtain a place on the Ashridge doctoral programme got me started on an unexpected line of inquiry.

It seems that much of my life has been spent in 'combat mode' like a bulldozer opening up new ground and charging into the possibility of what it could become. What is called for now, and what I am drawn to, is a more collaborative and considered approach.

What was the combat mode of the pioneer charging into new ground all about? As the study progressed there were two words that stood out, land and leadership. They proved to be far more connected than I realised. Freya Mathews poses the question:

How do we treat the ground beneath our feet? What is the attitude of modernity to the ground on which we walk and live? (Mathews 2005, p.199)

What is the relationship between land and leadership? Colonialism was forged on the belief of separation of self from land and the wider cosmos, a belief which underpins many of the environmental and social challenges of the current historical moment (Berry 1988, 1999; Dirlik 2013). Facing colonialist attitudes towards the land in my background shone a light on the challenges I have faced in developing collaborative leadership. Through the course of this inquiry I recognised ways in which my approach to leadership was controlling, and not as inclusive as it could be.

I also describe how changes in the cosmological story influenced entrenched cultural attitudes towards the land. For example, for the last three hundred years or more a dominant Western mind-set has viewed the universe and the land within it as a mindless machine composed of separate parts and as a commodity. In contrast I am interested in how we can embrace not only the earth but also our organisations as living organisms in which even the smallest thing has a role to play. Richard Tarnas points out that good works to dismantle the shadow side of the modern mind meet a glass ceiling, because of a lack of engagement with the cosmology that forged the modern mind.

The great starting point for the whole trajectory of modern consciousness remains untouched. The cosmological meta-structure that implicitly contained and precipitated all the rest is still so solidly established as to be beyond discussion (Tarnas 2006, p.29).

I do not pretend to provide answers to 'doing leadership' based on a thorough analysis of academic literature. Instead I have focused on my own inherited back story of controlling land, which I relate to a controlling approach to leadership. I show how I learnt to let go of control by expanding my ways of knowing. This has made me more aware of a connected sense of self that is both still and moving.

Contribution to Practice and Literature

I maintain that change in what is sometimes referred to as mechanistic leadership (Wheatley 1999, 2007) cannot be externally imposed; for me it about an inner recognition that we are not separate individuals in an inanimate universe but rather participants in an ancient and emerging cosmic story that includes everyone and everything. In the tradition of Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry (1992), I refer to this as the Universe Story, a relational unfolding which contrasts with the divisiveness of the colonialist venture. The Universe Story as offered by Swimme and Berry is inspired by the restorative synthesis of Teilhard de Chardin:

Teilhard's genius lay partly in his capacity to weave one huge homogenous tapestry in which the prehistory of life and the phenomenon of man are parts of one unbroken stupendous flow – all unified by the ascent of evolution. Evolution is not only unifying it is also creative (Skolimowski 1994, p.92).

The challenge as I see it is how to bring the Universe Story to life as our own story in ways that offer meaning for us now. For example Teilhard's epic vision remains inaccessible to many due to limited ways of knowing and its strong Christian overtones.

Teilhard's reconstruction assumes that there is only one process; that of building up ontological complexity, the complexity of the world out there. Only the ontological dimension is present in Teilhard's idea of complexity. The epistemological dimension (how the mind receives and comprehends this complexity) is missing" (Skolimowski 1994, p.101).

I show how my colleagues and I have brought the Universe Story to life through different ways of knowing. In this way the Universe Story is no longer an event 'out there,' but rather an objective-subjective reality brought to life in multiple ways through individual interpretation. In this way it is an approach that is culturally inclusive. Notions of the cosmos, whether scientific or religious, can all too easily become little more than fixed abstract ideas. Indeed Teilhard maintained that for the universe to become meaningful we must find the personal in the cosmos (Tucker 2008). However, unlike Teilhard's writing or much of the subsequent literature surrounding the Universe Story, I offer a first-hand account of how I have applied a cosmic perspective to day-to-day leadership challenges.

My position as founding director of Global Generation and researcher is about as 'inside' as one could get. Caroline Humphrey claims that if an insider is too inside it can "jeopardize ethnographic research which dictates that the insider has some surplus capacity for observation, and that the researcher is not simply reflecting upon phenomena which she produced in the first place" (2007, p.16). I maintain that my very personal account offers a different and potentially more valid perspective than attempts to observe an objectified 'other'.

The following pages present a spiritual journey that enabled me to find home in a sense of self that is not separate from the farthest reaches of the cosmos. My early experiences of this non-dual perspective were inspired by Krishnamurti, who I began reading when I was 19. Through the doctoral journey I was to discover that an evolving and interdependent sense of self, as described by Teilhard, Swimme and Berry, resonates with aspects of Māori philosophy.

I curate the research journey through the Three Baskets of Knowledge, which invited inquiry into different dimensions of who I am and what I am a part of. The Three Baskets can broadly be described as self, other and connection. Revered by New Zealand Māori as sacred (Marsden 2003), these cultural treasures are the gift of a people whose identity is based on a participatory relationship with the land and the wider cosmos. The Three Baskets helped me make sense of experiences that went beyond the narrow definition of knowledge and the rational approach that has been so highly regarded in the modern world.

The First Basket of knowledge encouraged me to face more of who I am; the fullness and the emptiness, the joy and the pain. In the Second Basket of knowledge I listened to the voices of my colleagues and the stories in the land. I discovered that just as my forebears had made scars upon the land in their drive for 'improvement', I too was holding a singular utopian story. When our organisation was first established, some of my friends jokingly referred to it as Global Domination. This inquiry has helped me appreciate the truth in their words. I saw how I held the story of an evolving universe in a rigid way, which meant I imposed fixed ideas on my colleagues. I grappled with the push of the pioneer and the pull to an older, deeper, more connected part of me which I felt was a fertile ground for collaborative practice.

The third basket of knowledge encouraged me to step beyond a Eurocentric frame of development. Through myth and indigenous stories I embraced multiple interpretations of the cosmos. This called me to re-inhabit an older reality (Berry 1988, 1999; Buber 1947; 1958; Reason 1994; Skolimowski 1994; Tarnas 1999) in which home is the cosmos. I consider this to an enchanted reality (Mathews 2003, Curry 2012). In terms of what is offered as reality in today's mechanistic world some may consider the enchantment insubstantial or representative of primitive magical thinking. I came to appreciate enchantment as neither of those, nor as an idealised state, but as that; indefinable, unbroken essence that gives life in whatever form it takes, its deepest meaning (Curry 2012). I feel that enchantment is a condition/world that exists despite our dominant world. Enchantment runs beneath the fragmentation of the mechanical mind and a colonialist past. Naming and specifically defining this older, deeper, richer, more connected sense of self seems impossible. History would suggest that naming runs the risk of owning and fencing as opposed to discovering freshly each time.

This naming process must cease, not only on the superficial levels of the mind, but throughout its entire structure. This is an arduous task, not to be easily understood or lightly experienced; for our whole consciousness is a process of naming or terming experience, and then storing or recording it. It is this process that gives nourishment and strength to the illusory entity, the experience as distinct and separate from the experience (Krishnamurti 1956, p.69).

Not naming is of course an almost impossible challenge, in an academic endeavour. For the sake of not losing you as a reader, I offer some guidance. In the pages that follow I most often refer to this deeper, enchanted, indefinable dimension of life as a boundary-less land or a boundary-less sense of self. I also refer to it as a cosmic self; in other words a

sense of self that is at home in the cosmos. Martin Buber points to why finding home in the cosmos is a challenging concept for those of us living at this time.

The ages when man is at home in the cosmos are set in contrast to those when he is not at home, those when he becomes a problem to himself. Our age is seen as the most homeless of all because of the loss of both an image of the world (modern physics can offer us only alternative equations) – and a sense of community (Buber, 1947, p.xviii).

I regard being at home within the cosmos as being indigenous to the cosmos; a sense of identity that is available to all peoples. I illustrate the ways in which embracing cosmic indigeneity opened new collaborative possibilities and a moral compass within my leadership practice. I also describe how it has been a decolonising journey in that it enabled me to stand in a cosmic identity that includes and goes beyond cultural history; an identity that enabled me to listen more deeply to both land and people.

There is a need for a *functional cosmology*, a cosmology that will provide the mystique needed for this integral earth-human presence (Berry 1988, p.66).

In discussing a functional cosmology, Berry draws on the indigenous sensibilities of early peoples. In contrast with the “fragmentation of consciousness that characterises modern times” (Reason 1994, p.10) the connection of ancient peoples to origin stories gave them a meaningful and participatory place in the cosmos. Awakening to a more participatory sense of being underpins my claim that embracing cosmic indigeneity helped me grow a collaborative leadership practice. This contribution to practice is informed by a question that ran through the whole of my inquiry: What are the implications, for me, of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe?

Chapter 1 – Finding Form and Method

Rod is playing the guitar in the room next door and through the glass doors that divide us I can see his foot tapping. I look around me taking in all the accoutrements that have helped this journey of meaning-making; a recorder, notebooks, laptop, papers highlighted, typed up notes printed out, a box of coloured pencils, a book shelf stuffed to overflowing, a red reading chair and stones to remind me that it takes time for understanding to emerge... missing are all the people involved in this inquiry. While it has been an autoethnography, it has also been a collective process.

Finding my Feet

Before the doctoral journey, I had been writing as a form of inquiry (Richardson 1990; Marshall 1999). It was a process that revealed unease at the occupation and control of others' territory; themes of colonialism surfaced that became central to this thesis. In this chapter I write about the history of ethnographic research and the evolution of autoethnography, both in my own practice and the wider research culture. As my inquiry unfolded it became more apparent why autoethnography, the study of self, felt like a meaningful form of research for me to pursue, as the descendant of colonisers. I describe a process of gathering, making and sharing stories; developing a style which I hope brings you, the reader, into dialogue with parts of yourself that resonate with the territory I explore. I expand the boundaries of how this new and emerging discipline was employed by first generation autoethnographers. I point out that pain and suffering have tended to be the domain of autoethnography. I focus on wholeness and social dysfunction. Wholeness, as I refer to it, heals a split not only between one's own mind and body but also between the identification of self with ecology and the wider cosmos.

My inquiry held an aspiration for collaborative leadership and this, by definition, was not an isolated endeavour. I describe three dimensions of action research: first, second and third person, which I locate within the Three Baskets of Knowledge.

You many have already noticed that I have introduced a variety of fonts to denote different literary devices e.g. scholarly and narrative and the words of different people. I will point out and define each style; 'personal account', *journal entry*, *participant quote** and *mythic story* in single quotation marks as it is encountered.

First Steps

In 2010 I integrated my experience and observation of others into narrative stories. Writing was a process that helped me digest the intensity of the present. Much later I realised that it was also a process that helped make sense of the past. I had been to Israel twice. When I was there I had very little idea of what was going on in the small clutches of houses nestled into the hillsides that I glimpsed as we sped along the motorway. The following is an 'account' of looking across a border into an occupied no-country country.

It is 2010. I am part of a delegation of female youth workers from Camden visiting Palestinian women. I wanted to join the trip because for over ten years I have worked with Muslim girls. I struggle to digest the immensity of what I am seeing; a very conscious system of squeezing out the Palestinians from Jerusalem and many parts of the West Bank through a series of high concrete walls with check points. The walls look different on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side. Built to encircle villages and in many cases dividing families, who have special passes to go into different places. The complexity of the situation creates a combination of horror and numbness in me; it isn't obvious where any hope of a lasting solution might lie. Writing gives me the space to absorb multiple narratives, one story on top of another story, one country on top of another country and my own experience running through it all. I want to record my experience while it is occurring and wonder what my Jewish friends who I will visit ten days later in Israel will make of it.³

It was in Palestine that I first began to feel grief in relationship to the fencing and the colonising of land. At that point I made no connection with my own background, but I was curious about what lay behind the strength of my emotion.

For the first time in days the sun is shining and the ancient olive groves, some of them 2,000 years old, are glistening. As we walk people give us handfuls of Maramia⁴ which they swear by for stomach ailments. Ambling along the dusty path, watching boys ride bareback on graceful Arab horses, I feel at home with a people who are very much a farming people and also a highly intellectual people. As we walk up to the first stages of the construction of a new wall I realise that this way of life is, for many, about to end. Apparently without warning, a farmer can suddenly find the tell-tale curly barbed wire dividing his land. A wet area of land is also pointed out, not an underground spring, but untreated sewage and waste water flowing down from the

⁴

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

Israeli settlement on the hill above us. As the days go by I learn to identify them; the settler's houses with their red roofs on the hilltops.

The experiences I had in Israel were the beginning of my inquiry into the way the New Zealand version of colonialism has shaped who I am.

Permission to Focus on Self

Like the word leadership, the concept of 'research' is power-laden and political.

Who researches who and how, whose experience is researched and how is that named and categorised, what discourse gains currency and holds power, what forms of inquiry and writing are favoured by 'mainstream' power-holders? (Marshall 1999, p.158).

Fast forward three years after my visit to Palestine. On my mother's bookshelf I found Ward's New Zealand (1839), a handbook produced for New Zealand colonists. It describes how colonists were actively encouraged to share with the 'motherland' their observations of the native population. The objects of colonialist research did not have a choice whether they were researched; nor were they invited to be participants in the research. In contrast, some Indigenous and postmodernist researchers since the 1980s have recognised the need to resist the colonial impulse "of authoritatively entering a culture, exploiting cultural members, and then recklessly leaving to write about the culture for monetary and/or professional gain, while disregarding relational ties to cultural members" (Ellis et al. 2011, p.2). I was encouraged to think about the history of research and how it might influence my own approach when I began the doctoral journey.

"Would it be alright if it was just about the 'I'? Why don't you go deeply into your history? You might like to follow an autoethnographical process in which you examine wisely and exquisitely where your interest in the things you seem so excited about really started." These were the words of Robin Ladkin, one of my supervisors in the first week at Ashridge.

Despite my resistance to the starkness of what was being suggested, I felt a moment of trust. The energy changed in the group, we were all very present in that moment. Throughout the afternoon during my journey back to London, discomfort turned to curiosity. I had the sense of everything slowing down. That evening I ordered a book by Caroline Ellis; a first generation autoethnographer

Autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness ... Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of

their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (Ellis 2000, p.37).

Kendall Smith Sullivan researched autoethnographers who have been influenced by early pioneers like Caroline Ellis. Quoting one of her research participants, Elissa Foster, Kendall writes of autoethnography as; “using yourself as an instrument in order to access understanding about the culture” (2008, p.89). This description aligns with my experience in that I studied myself in order to gain understanding about the current and historical culture that shapes who I am.

By way of beginning, Caroline Ellis encourages researchers to learn about autoethnography “by simply going out (and in) and doing it and ideally doing both” (2004, p.37). I paid attention to when I sensed a different quality of awareness in myself, as I wrote about the past and the present.



Figure 2: J.R. Early Journals

I made time most days to engage in a process of freefall writing, ignoring the critical mind and letting the writing process take its own emergent form. Barbara Turner Vesselago (2013) invites a freefall writer to find depth through lingering within the sensuous detail.

Times of early morning journaling became an opportunity to bring experiences that held meaning for me to the surface. This was a process of *tracking self*, which transcended my limited ideas of what *self* might actually be.

J.R. Journal – May 15th, 2011

As I write I begin to hit my core, the mind settles into me and out of me, not propelled by pre-meditated thoughts but flowing free in a field of unbroken awareness – a ‘boundaryless’ land that gives expression as it arises.

Embracing the autoethnographic convention of combining different literary devices (Denzin 2014; Ellis 2004; Sparkes 2002) meant I drew on an extended theory of knowledge (epistemology) that included and went beyond objective rationality (Heron 1996; Heron and Reason 2008). I crossed boundaries between time periods and different genres of writing; layering together personal, fictional and mythic stories, poetry, journal entries, email correspondence, theoretical writing and accounts of dreams. I developed an imaginative form of inquiry (Polanyi and Prosch 1975; Skolimowski, 1994). For example; I pictured myself in the cosmic reality of my early ancestors communicating with the earth and the wider cosmos. I opened myself to a sense of connection, respect and fear that I imagined they might have felt. The experience deepened as I wrote accounts in a mythic style.

In line with Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011), who describe the procedural nature of autoethnography, I simultaneously collected evidence and analysed findings in reference to literature, producing accounts that mixed the poetic with scholarship. This was supported by an aesthetic reading of others’ writing (Barone 1990). I engaged in this form of embodied inquiry by focussing on my experience as I read “The Ethnographic 1” by Caroline Ellis on my way to visit my brother in Berlin. When the words were alive I felt myself enter into active dialogue with what I was reading. New insights emerged easily. Caroline Ellis and her mentor Laurel Richardson are both influenced by Brenda Ueland who wrote in the 1930s. My ‘journal entries’ indicate how in reading their work I felt a combination of exhilaration, letting go and curiosity

J.R. Journal – May 28th, 2011

As I read on I sense that I can learn a lot from Caroline Ellis and at the same time I note that something is missing from her writing that was present in Brenda Ueland’s writing. I look back in my journal from a few days before.

J.R. Journal – May 24th, 2011

In Brenda Ueland's writing there is a compelling call for us to be all that we are; to give ourselves permission to express the fire of our inherent genius, throwing out all modesty and caution, not as small things but as poison that will erode our souls. Ueland breaks the rules of convention and it is thrilling! "Just let yourself write and you will be amazed by the order that is there, but we are taught to have structure first, to know where you are going and then to go there".⁵

May 28th

Curious now, I ask myself what is the difference between Ellis and Ueland? Is it that Ellis is exploring struggle and fragmentation through writing and Ueland is singing about a primal and undivided territory? I read on - page 43 holds a clue.

Ellis describes how the roots of autoethnography lie in social science, which implies that autoethnography is founded in fragmentation. "... from the beginning (social science) has been grounded in understanding deviance, evil, dysfunction, mental illness, abuse and abnormal behaviour ... when we are happy we don't want to stop doing what we are doing to write about it. Happiness and the mundane don't always make a good plot, which works better with a build-up of tension and usually some resolution" (Ellis 2000, p.43).

Ellis also offers an invitation. "I hope we can figure out how to write evocatively about happiness and joy" (Ibid, p.44). I begin to reflect on the implications of the words ontology and epistemology; the nature of being and knowing. I ask what am I experiencing and what is the lens through which I am recognising my experience?

As I walk along the S-Bahn platform in Berlin with my brother Mo I try to explain autoethnography and the difference between Ueland and Ellis. He casually says, "of course they are different, they were writing at different times".

Ueland was writing in 1938, and was an unusually independent woman for that era. Ellis was writing in 2004, a postmodern social scientist. For much of the doctoral inquiry I almost religiously followed Brenda Ueland's advice, recommended by Laurel Richardson; "just write and structure will automatically be there" (1938). I then studied the structured and intentional patterns of others' doctoral work, which helped me appreciate the orienting value of a repeated style of presentation, which I employ in subsequent chapters.

⁵ (Ueland 1938, p.29)

Autoethnography demands a rigorous focus on self. Like others I often felt uncomfortable at number of times 'I' appeared on the page (Marshall 1999). My greatest fear was that the reader would find the writing self-indulgent. Writing oneself into the text as a major character challenges the accepted academic practice of silent authorship, in which the author's voice is kept on the side-lines; excluded from the presentation of findings (Holt 2003; Sparkes 2002). Some critics maintain that autoethnography lacks the empirical rigour required to be considered a serious social science. They have argued that it is literally and intellectually lazy (Delamont 2007), invalid because it is primarily based on a single case study (Sparkes 2002 citing one of his reviewers), indulgent and self-obsessed (Coffey 1999). An alternative view, held during the middle ages and now understood through quantum science, is that each person is a microcosm of the whole cosmos, which points to the possibility and value of individuals studying themselves in order to intuit aspects of the totality (Bohm and Peat 1987). This view contrasts with mechanistic notions of self.

The mechanistic notion of the universe which does not see human beings as participants in the whole, discounts knowledge that can be consciously gained by a first person observer (Isaacs 1999, p.144).

Krishnamurti stresses that real understanding comes through a process of studying one's relationship to outward things and to inward things and maintains that "every other form of understanding is merely an abstraction" (Krishnamurti 2010, p.16).

Reading Kendall Smith Sullivan's thesis (2008) about second generation autoethnography I felt that I had come home.

It is 3pm and I haven't stirred from the bed covers. Not asleep but awake, very awake. I have nearly swallowed in one go the whole of a thesis written about autoethnography and written as an autoethnography. No time for note-taking, just deeply resonating as I drink the words. I enter other worlds. I feel the caramel arms of a nanny serving sticky chocolate pudding, the pain of an alcoholic parent disguised in a pastel Jackie Kennedy suit and the thrill of an interview on a luminous green damask couch. I notice that my whole body feels energized.

Kendall's work reinforced the intention for my work to be judged as an autoethnography. I can feel truth and resolve in Kendall's view; "There is an innate and continuous need that humans have to understand themselves, others and their culture within the context of stories" (Smith Sullivan 2008, p.6). In the context of autoethnography, story enables historicity to intersect with every-day circumstances. "Autoethnography should use a story to illuminate larger social issues where the micro and the macro come together

and illuminate one another” (Smith Sullivan quoting Spry 2008, p.89). The macro in this thesis refers not only to culture but also to the wider cosmos, which I see not just as a place but as our story (Swimme 1984). Including the wider cosmos as self pushes the boundary of what has been considered autoethnography. As mentioned previously, most autoethnography deals exclusively with personal illness and social dysfunction. I used story to help me identify with a cosmic self, in turn this helped me come to terms with and heal the personal consequence of a kind of illness; that of separation from land.

Aligning with Cosmic Context

I have had a strong orientation towards the positive which limited my ability to see and learn from the whole of my experience. It also meant that others in the Global Generation team felt constrained in terms of talking about the fears and challenges they were facing in our work together. Consequently it took several years before I saw my experience of colonialism in terms of social dysfunction. In his paper “Action Research as a Spiritual Practice”, Reason (2000) draws on a description by Matthew Fox (1983) about the two domains of *Via Positiva* and *Via Negativa* within creation spirituality.

The *Via Positiva* reminds us that we begin in original blessing rather than original sin, in the ‘awe, wonder and mystery of nature and of all beings, each of whom is a “word of God”’. The *Via Positiva* tells us to ‘fall in love at least three times a day’ - in love with the cosmos, in love with a wildflower, in love with a symphony, in love with another person. The *Via Positiva* tells us that awe, wonder, and falling in love matter. Blessing is about abundance, about joy, about passion; about being part of the earth, part of the cosmos; about beauty and harmony and balance (Reason citing Matthew Fox 2000, p.4).

The *Via Negativa* reminds us that darkness and nothingness, silence and emptying, letting go and letting be, pain and suffering, also constitute a real part of our spiritual journey. The *Via Negativa* instructs us ‘Thou shalt dare the dark’ (Ibid, p.5).

Part of this doctoral journey has been about finding a way to integrate the positive and the negative. In the following chapters I describe how I embraced and worked with an arguably negative relationship to land in my cultural background. I also write about finding stillness beneath pain. For most of my adult life the practice of meditation has been an important way for me to access this un-bounded territory. Meditation, which to Global Generation participants I refer to as ‘sitting still’, has been about letting go and making room within attachments for a different experience of life. In the first week of the doctoral programme, one of our supervisors played us the Van Morrison song, *In the Garden* and asked us to talk in pairs about the question: what was your relationship to thought before you thought there was a problem?

I was a child of about nine picking blackberries beside Wirihana, the Girl Guide house near to where we lived. We used to put the ladder on top of the brambles and scramble over to find the sweetest, juiciest blackberries. I loved the wildness of the place. One day I was there on my own and when I had picked enough blackberries; I lay on the grass. Feeling the warmth of the sun I looked up at the sky and the space. I was pulled by a sense that there was more going on than I had been told about, what was it about the space that went on forever?

Years later I came to understand this space as the endless field of emptiness out of which everything, all the objects that I have names for, arises. The blackberries, in other words the objects, the thoughts and a sense of self as a separate entity, moved to the background and at times disappeared; this endless space became the foreground. As I see it, this boundaryless dimension of self holds a key to Ellis's call; "I hope we can figure out how to write evocatively about happiness and joy" (2000, p.44).

Denzin describes how biography, autobiography and autoethnography conventionally begin with stories about one's family as a point of origin (2014, p.7). For me the word family has a cosmic connotation; it includes land and the wider cosmos. As a child I expressed this Indigenous sense of family, when I found the rocks in our playground comforting. I can remember their warmth and stability as I placed my hands on them. I somehow knew the earth was my mother (Campbell 1986, p.7).

Doing It with Quality Criteria in Mind

Swimme and Berry describe the auto-poetic nature of the universe, in which everything, from stars to soil to human beings, participates directly in a cosmos-creating endeavour. They go on to describe how the nature of existence is relationship, and that "nothing is itself without everything else" (1992, p.77). Whilst I have privileged a self-story-making process of research, these stories would not be whole if they remained only my account. Norman Denzin writes:

For autoethnographers narrative truth is based on how a story is used, understood and responded to. Validity includes that a work has verisimilitude ... evokes a feeling that the experience described is true, coherent, believable and connects the reader to the writer's world (Denzin 2014, p.70).

To that end I have shared the stories and invited responses from those I have inquired with and written about. Rachel Solomon, Global Generation's Youth Programmes Manager, provides an example of how readers might connect to what I have written about:

There is something in me that feels strangely reflected in what I read in your writing... of the inner work, of awareness... grappling and striking the right balance... October 28th, 2014

Rachel's comment is an example of how I use 'participants' comments' as evidence of validity throughout the paper. I interpret the notion of validity in qualitative terms, as opposed to focusing solely on "getting it right" (Reason 2006). In terms of quality in autoethnographic work; "it is the meaning of the story that is important rather than conventions of scholarly production" (McIlveen 2008, p.17). The stories that I have layered into more scholarly writing have been held over a number of years. The lens of time has enabled me to see the relevant questions and the re-emerging patterns within them. In a second drafting of the thesis I returned to the chronology of my understanding, which is reflected in how I have presented material.

Unlike a pure autoethnography, which represents only the researcher's experience, I thought about quality within the three recognised territories of action research; first person, second person and third person, which are often referred to as 'me, us and them' (Coleman 2011; Marshall and Mead 2005). Whilst accessible in terms of social identity, these terms can potentially obscure an Indigenous or cosmic sense of self in which 'me' merges with 'we'.

The image of me divides the observer and the observed... If a true self does exist, it's surely hidden by or made inactive by this me process that seems to fill the whole system. It's like the lights of the city which shine brighter than the stars, so that you don't see the universe (Nichol citing Bohm 2003, pp.247-248).

Rather than 'Me, Us and Them' I inquired within the Three Baskets of Knowledge drawn from Māori mythology, which invited a shift towards cosmic Indigeneity. Working within the Three Baskets of Knowledge, (self, other and connection) built upon 'I, We and The Planet' (c.f. Wilber 1996) which I had introduced to Global Generation in 2008, and which has informed our organisational and educational practice ever since. From the outset I sought to develop inquiry with my colleagues that was appropriate to our own experience and context rather than rely on expert knowledge in the form of literature or individuals (Reason 1994, Heron 1996, Altrichter 1999). The most important quality criterion has been practical impact which relates to the first and second basket of knowledge, i.e. self and the colleagues that I inquired with: "did the practice contribute to personal and social transformation according to the inquirer's view of an intrinsically worthwhile way of life for human beings" (Heron 1996, p.171). Other criteria sit within each basket respectively.

First Basket of Knowledge (Self): Are the stories a faithful and comprehensive rendition of my day-to-day experience? (McIlveen 2008). Did writing and sharing stories that locate self within an ecological-cosmological frame change the way I understand myself and what I do as a leader?

-Second Basket of Knowledge (Other): Did I hold democratic and participative relationships with those I inquired with? This can be evidenced by whether or not leadership within Global Generation became collaborative, and how others responded to stories I wrote about them.

-Third Basket of Knowledge (Connection): How did the stories of our practice travel and inform the wider Global Generation community and others beyond our community?

Expanding on the individualism that can be a limitation of autoethnography (Gergen 2015), I draw on experiences of collaborative inquiry with my colleagues and with members of my family. A regular opportunity for collaborative inquiry occurred in bi-weekly sessions of 6 – 10 people involved with Global Generation, which we called 'engaged philosophy'. The group was culturally diverse; British, Eritrean, New Zealand, Belgian, Italian, Indian and Ethiopian, and we also performed very different roles in the organisation. One of the goals of collaborative modes of research is to dissolve the subject-object relationship and to create the conditions for an equal power balance (Heron, 1996 and Reason, 1996). For a long time I felt the idea of equal power was un-obtainable. For example, my cultural identity and my role as organisational leader meant I tended towards a dominant rather than a subordinate position. Equality in terms of power and status seemed like a distant and unachievable idea (see also Gaya Wicks 2006, Ladkin 2007, Coglán and Brannick 2014). Reason also suggests "Action research is an aspiration, rather than a possibility" (as cited by Ladkin 2007, p.488). I eventually realised that the most important thing was to suspend the dominating and separating influence of ego. The engaged philosophy sessions and away days have usually begun with a short period of 'sitting still' accompanied by clear guidelines for encouraging collaborative inquiry; listen deeply, let go of what one already knows and follow the thread of conversation. These disciplines helped me step out of an unhelpful identification of being the organisational leader or the session facilitator who needed 'to know'. In comparing these sessions to the literature surrounding action research, I recognise elements of co-operative inquiry (Heron 1996) and Participatory Action Research (Reason 1994; Reason and Bradbury 2006). Our sessions have been smaller than the dialogue groups described by David Bohm

(1996) Nichol (2003). However, like Bohm's descriptions, we have experienced times when a shared field of understanding has opened between us in which boundaries and hierarchical roles have temporarily disappeared. In these situations recognising the shifts in one's state of being is important. In philosophical terms I would say a state of being (ontology) recognised through an extended theory of knowledge (epistemology) is primary. As I wrote this I felt the inequality and alienation academic endeavours can engender. Like cosmic self and cosmic indigeneity, ontology and epistemology are words I seldom use in my day-to-day practice.

J.R. Journal – March 1st, 2016

The day after writing about my wariness towards the words ontology and epistemology I am in a meeting with the Global Generation education team. We are discussing how we might best sustain the spiritual side of our practice in ourselves and in those we work with, whilst ensuring we keep the work fluid, open and accessible. As our programmes expand into employability for the hospitality industry there is concern that some of my colleagues could be pigeon holed as administrators and others as artists and philosophers. Despite my concerns at being overly academic it felt natural to address our dilemma with an explanation of ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. I was amazed at the level of recognition and enthusiasm amongst my colleagues to embody a philosophical frame. Rachel began to draw her understanding in a way which connected our shared practice to her understanding of these words.

The interest of my colleagues was encouraging. However I would like my work to be accessible beyond my immediate circle and because I see myself as a practitioner more than an academic I decided to use the words ontology and epistemology sparingly throughout the thesis. The exception is the following chapter which focuses largely on Heron and Reason's work with an extended epistemology.

After each engaged philosophy session I engaged in free fall writing about the experience I was having. I then transcribed recordings of the sessions, which gave an opportunity for further reflection. A next step was to craft elements of the transcript into stories. I wrote of my internal experience; the fears, the excitements, the uncertainties and the quality of energy between my colleagues and me. I wanted to make these things more visible to myself and I also wanted the reader to feel they were in the room with us. Finally I analysed the findings in the stories through comparison with literature.

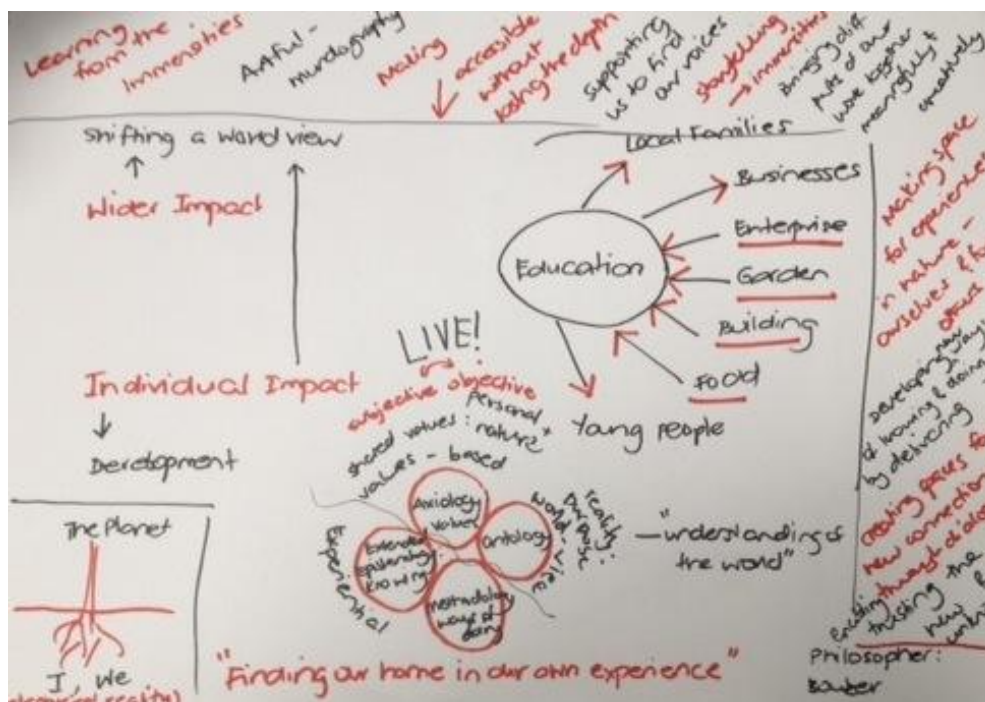


Figure 3: Rachel Solomon Making Meaning with the 'Ologies'

Ethics of Insider Research

Referring to the Belmont report, Brydon-Miller (2008) lays out the principles for good practice in action research, listing three key elements that need to be addressed: informed consent; selection of subjects; and a thorough assessment of risks and benefits. Considering these principles highlights challenges I experienced in practice-based research. Evered and Louis (1981) describe how markedly different their insider research was from the academic social science model:

We were probing in the dark into the hidden organisational realities around us, in many directions simultaneously. It was a multisensory, holistic immersion. We did not form and test explicit hypotheses, we did not do a literature search, we had no elaborate instruments (1981, p.387).

Coghlan and Shani describe the predicament I often found myself in:

If action research is a 'journey' and 'evolves' how can informed consent be meaningful? Neither action researcher nor participants can know in advance where the journey will take them and cannot know to what they are consenting (2005, p.340).

In my various roles it was hard and perhaps not helpful to determine in advance at what point someone would become a 'research subject'. For example I often wear a number

of hats at the same time: teacher, organisation leader and researcher. Lincoln (2001) suggests that “protocols are inadequate and are insufficient to meet the face-to-face, participative close work of action research” (cited by Coghlan and Shani 2005, p.538). I thought that telling people I was engaged in doctoral research might create a barrier.

In much fieldwork there seems to be no way around the predicament that informed consent – divulging one’s identity and research purpose to all and sundry – will kill many a project stone dead (Punch 1994, p.90).

Contrary to Punch’s warning and my own reticence I discovered that sharing writing with those I had written about fostered participative relationships. From early on my colleague Nicole encouraged me to keep sharing my writing with the rest of the team:

I’m so happy that you bring us into your enquiries and the research you are doing - I really feel that it helps with keeping what we do alive as well as all of us to be able to grow individually. - Nicole van den Eijnde, March 24th, 2012

Autoethnography is a young discipline without hard and fast rules, which meant I needed to determine my own conventions. For example I decided to use real names and first names for the people I know personally and authors who I felt I built a personal relationship with, like Kendall Smith Sullivan. I maintain that naming participants grounds inquiry in practice; it also held me to greater ethical account. Every person that I have named has consented to their real name being used. However, where naming is potentially detrimental I have not been specific about names and organisations and I have used pseudonyms.

My mother, Yvonne Riddiford, now 91 is the Kuia (elder) and still very much the leader of our family. She has been a strong supporter of Global Generation’s work and my research journey. Inevitably she became part of this inquiry. She carries the stories of past generations and is actively involved in the lives of her children and grandchildren. In doing so she finds herself empathising with and occupying conflicting worldviews. I wanted to write about events as I perceived them without falling into the ethical pitfall that Conquergood refers to as the ‘custodians rip off’ (1985, p.5) in which cultural custodians ransack their own or others’ biographical past, often denigrating family members. I wondered how best to share my writing with her. In a phone conversation I told her that I felt anxious about how she would receive the accounts of our family mythology. I emailed her the accounts and she replied saying; “You are telling it how it is. If you didn’t feel vulnerable your work wouldn’t be good.”



Figure 4: Yvonne Riddiford - In the Skip Garden 2016

Summary

Autoethnography is a first person practice, which I came to see as a relational practice. As I experienced while reading Smith Sullivan's work, good autoethnographic writing brings the reader into dialogue with what is being written. Working with the localised and embodied nature of autoethnography helped me close the split not only between mind and body, but also between myself and the earth as a source of meaning and value. A split propagated by mechanistic ways of thinking. In this regard I suggest that my efforts illustrate a contribution which helps close the split between modernist scientific thinking and Indigenous ways of being. The indigenous Māori story of the Three Baskets of Knowledge deepened my understanding of 'I, We and the Planet'. The first basket of knowledge spoke to more of my experience, both a boundless sense of identity and the movements of ego. Working with all three Baskets guided me into a meaningful cosmology of connection through which I recognised my Indigenous self. It was through holding three territories of

experience; self (I), connection (we) and other in terms of social and environmental legacy (the planet) in my awareness that I learnt to hold multiple perspectives. This shaped a personal inquiry question held within macro and micro contexts; what are the implications for me of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe?

I hope these stories will be useful stories not only for a wider audience but also for those I have written about. My sister describes it like this;

Weaving is the gathering together of threads and this is the role you play in the family. You are promoting a sense of connection with each of us. You are driven by the needle of your inquiry, taking it down and up, down and up through the warp and weft of the family fabric and this is opening up the inquiry for the next generation to break the mould and take risks - Liz Riddiford, March 22nd, 2014.

Chapter 2 - Cosmic Roots

Grounding Literature in Experience

This chapter introduces literature that informs and aligns with the participatory and experiential nature of action research. By way of introduction I want to give you a little more background about myself. It will provide context for why I was drawn to pursue an action research approach and why the scholarship surrounding Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme provided an orientation for my thesis.

Since I was 20, I have been involved in work in the arts, the land and with young people. However more often than not I was silent about the very cosmic story behind my contributions in the world. The sense of a deeper reality that flows through all things made me curious about 'who I am', beyond the labels I gave myself. At a fairly young age, I realised that I wasn't an isolated individual but rather part of a bigger stream of life. At times this brought fear, as it clashed with the stories about what was important in life that I picked up at school and in my family. The tension between what was socially acceptable and a deeper calling was the catalyst for me to leave New Zealand to pursue a life-long exploration into meditation and other aspects of Eastern spirituality and Evolutionary spirituality. In 2003 I came across the work of Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry and heard them both speak that same year. Around the same time I co-founded Global Generation. Teilhard, Swimme and Berry imbued cosmology and ecology with meaning, values and a sense of purpose which spoke to my aspirations for Global Generation. My diary at the time shows how I began to think about how I might apply their ideas to the middle of an urban environment, to my work with young people and to the running of an organisation.

J.R. Journal – August 2nd, 2004

Developing an organisation is developing an ecosystem where there is balance and co-operation, homeostasis and dynamism. "There is a deep pull within us to discover and be true to the fact of our own interrelatedness. It is a way of creating a bigger human being. Our identity comes out of this place of togetherness, we must become kin, internally related". (Swimme and Berry 1992, p.133).

Cosmic descriptions illuminate meaningful experiences of land; "the crust of the earth holds the story book of life's adventure" (Swimme 1984, p.101). I tried to introduce these ideas into my practice and for reasons which this chapter touches upon I was

tentative. In the public sphere and to our funders it was far easier to speak about the social needs of young people and the environmental benefits of closing roads and organising cranes and tons of aggregate to create gardens on top of office buildings than the deeper movements of the cosmos. An opportunity to come out of the closet about the underpinning narrative for my work came through an action research-based MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice (RBp) at Bath University, which I began in 2008. Finding 'The Universe Story' (1992) by Berry and Swimme on the suggested reading list attracted me, along with the fact that the course promised to support a tempered form of radicalism (Meyerson and Scully 1995) within mainstream contexts. Unlike me, at least two thirds of the course participants were working in large corporate organisations.

This chapter describes the cosmic roots for the ontological and epistemological orientation of participatory/co-operative inquiry; which is a cornerstone of action research. I also highlight the fact that the cosmic grounding for this approach can all too easily become invisible and meaningless. Apart from one presentation by Peter Reason and talks by Stephan Harding on the Animate Earth (2006) during a week at Schumacher College, the words cosmos or universe were seldom mentioned during my time at Bath and subsequently at Ashridge Business School, which is now the home for the Centre for Action Research. The language of social and environmental action had far more traction. However, I have always been encouraged by my supervisors to pursue my interest in a functional cosmology. It would appear that in a modernist world it is more acceptable to focus on the visible fruits, without due consideration of the more invisible roots. A more post-modern take would address the invisible dimension of life in a psychological way. This chapter focuses experience of the cosmos as common ground. I have come to see the cosmos as an inherent order that includes and goes far beyond the boundaries of individual psychologies. It is an order that is uniquely known in the depth of oneself as an objective-subjective reality. For example I experience a cosmic identity within a vast unfolding universe through ways of knowing, which an action research-based approach gave me permission to explore.

Losing Cosmos

I deliberately focused on reading some of the literature after writing practice accounts. I maintain this provides authenticity and a more realistic and nuanced approach to a self-study on leadership. Hence it wasn't until the final months of the writing up process that I read *Participation in Human Inquiry* (1994), written by Peter Reason. This small volume shone a light on much of what I have discovered during the course of this inquiry.

The introductory chapters lay out the foundations for a participatory form of action research which calls for re-kindling earlier ways of knowing in which everything is alive with meaning, in which we identify our lives as interwoven into the fabric of an ancient and emerging cosmic story. Peter draws on a vast array of literature from a number of fields that highlight our connection and disconnection with a cosmic sense of self; feminist writing, mythology, science and cosmology including Berry and Swimme. Each page is a rich mine of references, which the willing student might pursue. If I had not already established my own line of inquiry I might well have felt overwhelmed, in terms of trying to deal with the huge territory that is laid out for the reader. In some ways the words hung there, as disembodied hints of potential that lay beneath the surface. The aim of the book is not to promote an ontological shift. Peter explains that others do this, and states "my intention has been to offer hints, some directions, to indicate some openings" (Reason 1994, p.38). In the introductory chapters there is a clear call to connection with an overarching cosmic context as the foundation for participatory research. This is not presented in the form of a personal story, nor does the text evoke a feeling or sense of home in me. There are hints that academic norms were constraining; "the common epistemology of the Western mind remains crudely positivist" (Ibid, p.9). Referring to Spretnik (1991), Peter writes of "the current academic mode which has made grand narrative unfashionable" and goes on to suggest that the "fashion of deconstructive postmodernism is a nihilistic extension of the alienation of modernism" (Ibid, p.17). This kind of language is not easy for the un-initiated. However the point Peter is making is relevant to my inquiry and so I will explain what I take from his words. A secular post-modern view would consider the idea of a cosmos as a coherent and meaningful story, at best as naive and at worst as oppressive. I write more about this in chapter 4. A totally deconstructed cosmos, in other words one in which there is no belief in objective reality, only subjective interpretation could lead to a sense of being rootless and homeless in a meaningless universe. This chilly intellectual climate perhaps explains why Peter makes little reference to how he was personally embodying a cosmic context. In my experience using the personal as a portal to making sense of cultural and cosmic inheritance, can render one vulnerable and at risk of not being taken seriously.

The second half of the 1994 book includes five practice accounts from other researchers who work with what Peter considers to be a participatory approach. A cosmic orientation is not present in these accounts; consequently I experience a disconnection between the two halves of the book. However I appreciate why that is. Over the last five years I have learnt that re-finding our home within the cosmos is not an idea to be imposed

on others, nor does it live as a name or a theory on the pages of books. It is a reality felt at the deepest level of our being. If this sense of home is to stay alive we need to actively engage with and artfully express our own sense of it. So the leadership of this work is an almost unbearably delicate balance of being intentional and letting go, being committed and flexible. In 2011, Peter and the other co-founders of the MSc RBp wrote a retrospective of their experience which sums up the leadership challenge as I see it:

We have also, at times, been very challenged by how best to act as tutors, constantly seeking an appropriate balance between control and letting go, active guidance and facilitation, claiming expertise and standing back to enable groups to find their own way. What we have been doing is not teaching, and not facilitation – but trying to act as guides, mentors, provocateurs and enablers; above all creating and holding a space within which participants could learn. It is a practice that we have developed as we have gone along, informed by feedback from our participants and our own reflective practice and team development processes (Marshall, Coleman, Reason 2011).

Honouring the facilitative process of enabling others to discover what is meaningful and useful for them explains why for the most part Peter was silent about the Universe Story during my time on the MSc programme. Despite seemingly little traction for the cosmic view in action research circles, Peter never abandoned his commitment to applying the Universe Story as a narrative for social and environmental change. In a book review on the work of scientist Tim Flannery, Peter wrote:

The necessary shift in worldview needs more than scientific information and theory. It needs us to re-engage with metaphysics, for there is far more to our world than science can tell us.... That this perspective is very difficult for Western-educated people to grasp is a symptom of the depth of materialist assumptions. However, a different philosophy by itself is not sufficient. We also need to find a way not just to know about Gaia but also to experience Gaia, to develop a sense of human identity as part of the whole, taking part in the existence of things, as Keats put it. Keats also told us that ideas had no impact until they were “proved upon our pulses”. We need to draw on art, poetry, drama and experiential education to integrate modern scientific inquiry into a shared pan-psychic experience of the interdependence of life on Earth (Reason 2011, p.61).

After retiring from academic life Peter wrote ‘Spindrift’ (2015), a personal account of his pilgrimage across the seas and under the stars in a small sailing boat. Before going to sleep one night I read his description of merging with the blackness of space. Through his words, I was drawn into the blackness beyond the stars. I experienced more of who I am; the very cosmic story as my story. I woke the next morning to see an email from Peter on our University alumni list in which he wrote:

Count me in as interested in changing narratives, although my focus since retiring has been wider than business, thinking of social narratives, building, developing the Berry/Swimme Universe Story - Peter Reason, 14th February, 2016.

Extended Epistemology

Peter worked closely with John Heron in an exploration of co-operative / participative inquiry. In the spirit constructive postmodernism, Heron, like Peter, embraces the metaphysical in which the experience of a 'given' cosmos is primary. I take the word 'given' to mean a sense of existence that it is shaped by subjective interpretation but is also not purely a social construct.

Co-operative inquiry rests on a related but distinct, fifth inquiry paradigm, that of a participatory reality. This holds that there is a given cosmos in which the mind creatively participates, and which it can only know in terms of its constructs, whether affective, imaginal, conceptual and practical (Heron 1996, p.10).

I understand the term 'given' cosmos to be what we know of nature through observation and experience rather than via inherited religious or cultural images of the cosmos. This is how Peter and John Heron describe an objective-subjective sense of reality:

Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a co-creative dance, so that what emerges as our reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way mind engages with it (Heron and Reason 1997, as cited in Marshall et al. 2011, p.11).

To understand Heron and Reason's sense of a cosmos that is an objective-subjective reality, Skolimowski is illuminating. His approach aligns with Heron and Reason's sense of a participatory cosmos and an associated participatory approach to inquiry. Whilst Skolimowski doesn't write in the form of a personal narrative in an 'I' framed fashion, what is obvious through his words is that he is living and breathing his own unique and evocative expression of the cosmic story as his own story. Skolimowski is deeply rooted in Teilhard's evolving ontology. He embraces the epic of evolution as a narrative which offers "confidence to live integrally and wholly in an age in which even atoms are split and disintegrate into a myriad of sub-elements" (Skolimowski 1994, p.91). His work is not an account of practice and like Teilhard, Skolimowski doesn't particularly focus on our current social and environmental predicament. Nonetheless I feel he offers a hopeful account of an ancient and emerging worldview inspired by a compelling sense of interdependence and participation which is the foundation of Berry's (1988) 'functional cosmology'. Teilhard claimed that the technique of

analysis and objectification that we have inherited from scientific method means we automatically depersonalise and distance ourselves from reality. This is compounded, he argued, by scientific revelations of the vastness of outer space, which can have the effect of dwarfing the human in relation to the cosmos (Tucker 1985). Skolimowski introduces ways of knowing that step far beyond the limitations of rational objectivity, which he claims is a "gentle form of lobotomy" (1994, p.181). He proposed a participatory methodology as "the methodology of an evolving universe" (Ibid, p.167).

Thus the participatory universe requires new research programmes which would clearly spell out for us new intellectual strategies, new forms of perception, new forms of reasoning, new languages and new apparatus.

The participatory research is the art of empathy
Is the art of communion with the object of enquiry
Is the art of learning to use its language
Is the art of talking to the object of our enquiry
Is the art of penetrating from within
Is the art of in-dwelling in the other
Is the art of imaginative hypothesis which leads to the art of identification
Is the art of transformation of one's consciousness so that it becomes part of the consciousness of the other (Skolimowski 1994, p.160).

Heron and Reason define an extended epistemology, which they offer as a foundation for genuine and effective participatory research. What they describe echoes patterns that emerged within my own research. They emphasise different ways of knowing, which could lead to a personal encounter with a more connected sense of being as offered by Teilhard, Berry and Swimme in their epic reconstruction of an evolving universe as ourself. Rather than imposing fixed ideas about the potential shift of identity that expanding our perception might lead to, Heron and Reason invite us to discover for ourselves. They focus on four ways of knowing.

Experiential knowing is through direct face-to-face encounter with person place or thing; it is knowing through the immediacy of perceiving, through empathy and resonance. *Presentational knowing* emerges from experiential knowing, and provides the first form of expressing meaning and significance through drawing on expressive forms of imagery through movement, dance, sound, music, drawing, painting sculpture, poetry, story, drama and so on. *Propositional knowing* about something, is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in informative statements. *Practical knowing* is knowing 'how to' do something and is expressed in a skill, knack or competence (Heron and Reason 2008).

The words 'extended epistemology' became the creed of the MSc programme, but what that actually meant was far more elusive. I also need to point out that Heron (1994)

wrote of his reluctance about committing his ideas to print, for fear they would be unhelpfully adopted as 'the way' by the enthusiastic beginner. Peter warns that reliance on external written authority "may prevent inquirers from stretching to develop their own unique approach to their work" (1994, p.192). Developing a living sense of what epistemology actually means for me has taken years of noticing experience and hours of journaling in which I have paid attention to repeated patterns. Eight years later I see different dimensions of an extended epistemology. My understanding expands on the description offered by Heron and Reason. For example, they describe experiential knowing as an encounter with a thing in the form of a person, place or object. I identify experiential knowing in the presence of no-thing, in the intangible sense of space that lies beneath, beyond, between the world of things. I experience through the practice of sitting still, walks in nature, or simply making a switch to becoming aware of awareness itself, an invisible field of knowing out of which the visible realm of 'thingness' arises. In this knowing, the categorising process of the mind is set free. It is as if knowing is occurring in another part of the self than the rational mind, an older more original dimension of self, a cosmic self that is not separate from what is being known.

Artful modes of expression are the life blood of presentational knowing. I experience more than Heron and Reason outline in their 2008 description of an extended epistemology. Presentational knowing is not simply our own artistic expression; it is the capacity to read, interpret and identify with the forms and patterns that are already there. In other words, it is our inner recognition of a given cosmos. Heron alludes to this in earlier writing:

For presentational knowing, reality is significant form and pattern, in perceptual and other imaging that interconnects analogically and metaphorically in a whole net-work of other significant forms and pattern (1996, p.164).

I discovered that the practices associated with producing local food and supporting bio-diversity offered a way of encouraging awareness of the metaphysical movements of a cosmic self, which can be seen in the rhythms and patterns of nature without needing to use language which I felt would be alienating to our participants (Riddiford 2011). Similarly in our Universe Story workshops Rod and I involve participants in charting the qualities of the cosmos in the form of values. Reason quotes Berry and Swimme who write of differentiation and communion as primary attributes of the universe. Elsewhere Swimme (2011) identifies powers of the Universe such as centration, allurement, homeostasis, emergence, transformation and interrelatedness. I realised that these and other patterns are not a fixed canon of how things are, but rather they are structures in the universe that

resonate differently with different individuals. Through contemplating the sheer scale of the journey of the universe, Xafsa, a 17-year-old Global Generation participant wrote:

Commitment has been around for a long time – from the beginning of the timeline until today. It has been around for so long it has even grown inside of us. The commitment of the universe is boiling in my blood. This shows me that we are all the universe, contributing to a bigger picture (as cited by Riddiford 2015, p.119).

As I see it, the power of presentational knowing is not about knowing an objective universe out there, but about an invitation to dig deep, to dare to give voice and imaginative expression to the depths of one's experience. This is where the universe becomes a living universe and where we rediscover the personal in the cosmos (Tucker interpreting Teilhard, 1985). Throughout the doctoral journey I have held a question about whether values are purely social constructs or whether they inherently exist in a deeper, cosmic dimension of self that is expressed in the rhythms and patterns of the universe and accordingly in our own lives. I first began asking this question because of the potency of an activity we have done for many years in Global Generation:

A session in the Skip Garden often begins with participants introducing themselves to each other by selecting and speaking about a value that is important to them. It is a way of encouraging people to show the best part of themselves. Despite initial reticence, time and time again we have witnessed barriers drop and the energy in a group transform (Riddiford 2013).

I have witnessed naming and discussion of values opening a doorway to a felt sense of self that goes beyond individual identity. A boundaryless sense of self that is me and as Lilienne describes is not only me or only you.

All I remember is arriving at the Skip Garden and being met by a portacabin full of construction workers. I wasn't impressed. I remember that I was so cynical and unmotivated. Then we were set a task, to partner up and get to know each other. What could I say? What couldn't I say, it's like we were from two different worlds. We sat in a big round tent with my Lithuanian partner by my side. I didn't say a word. It wasn't until the values cards were introduced and we had to explain them to each other...wow! This guy was deep. I got the chance to look behind the disguises of a construction site and realise that someone like me could talk to someone like him. We were somewhat alike. It was time to break the barrier - Lilienne Isebor, 16 years (as quoted by Riddiford 2013).

The value of a practice-based doctorate for me has been permission for attention to literature to come last. This means that I held propositional knowing in suspension until other forms of knowing were embraced and written about. Time has been critical in practical knowing. This is not simply about accomplishing a skill as Reason and Heron suggest, but rather assessing the practical benefit of my endeavours in terms of worthwhile personal,

social and environmental transformation. A process in which I have held my intentions lightly enough for what is important to be chosen, re-interpreted and applied by others in their own time, in their own shoes.

Summary

The fruits of the combined work of these early pioneers in terms of language, practice and intent have certainly trickled down through the action research community. A participatory view and an extended epistemology are still taught on academic programmes that are influenced by Heron and Reason's work. However the cosmic roots of these revolutionary and much-needed approaches might well remain lost in the mists of time. For the most part the email exchanges on the MSc alumni community list that I participate in would suggest this.⁶ In a similar vein in the final chapter, I discuss how the cosmic roots have largely disappeared from much of the current discourse on dialogue, a term often spoken of in business education. One could say that origins don't matter, what is most important is that there are people who are working across the globe on projects that support social and environmental change. However I hope this thesis will shine light on how our cosmic roots provide clues to deeper questions that do appear on our alumni list; clues about how we might begin to shift the underpinning narrative of leadership and in doing so create systemic change for a sustainable future.

In this chapter I returned to the problem of naming. One can glimpse and name wholeness but as I testify throughout this thesis the work of making whole is not an overnight affair achieved through naming. Valuing experiential, artistic, cognitive and practical ways of knowing has kept the work alive and honest. As I describe later, taking time to dwell in different territories of knowing has been a safeguard against the temptation of turning current insights, whether they stem from intellectual understanding or profound experiences of self as cosmos, into fixed and potentially incarcerating narratives.

Leadership within an objective-subjective context is challenging, and as I approached the end of the thesis I felt more keenly the delicacy of a cosmic flame that could so easily be extinguished, not in an actual sense but as an orienting light for our human endeavours. Subsequent chapters describe the potentials and pitfalls of an objective-subjective sense of

⁶ The alumni community includes the former MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice at Bath University, the current MSc in Sustainability and Responsibility at Ashridge and the former MA in Leadership for Sustainability at Lancaster University.

reality. A way of being that opened me to meaningful experience of the rhythms and patterns of a given cosmos that, in turn, invited me to stand in my own shoes and make room for difference in others.

Post Script

J.R. Journal – March 9th, 2016

The ink has barely dried on my comment about the absence of visible cosmic roots amongst the MSc community. Was it really true or did I just want to see it that way? In a perverse academic sort of way I was aware that a lack might add strength to my contributions. All I can say is that it seemed like the universe responded in a very cosmic way ... for the following three days emails arrived in my inbox from the MSc alumni list, emails which came in answer to a simple request from one of our tribe. What are your most inspiring leadership quotes? Two thirds of them were about the interconnections upon which the universe is built.

Chapter 3 - Unearthing Leadership

The director will see that ... however much home-work he does, he cannot fully understand a play by himself. Whatever ideas he brings on the first day, must evolve continually, thanks to the process he is going through with the actors (Brook 1968, p.119).

Champagne in my Veins

Even though I didn't particularly want to run an organisation, my sense of a 'bigger, deeper, more connected' sense of life drew me to think about the education of young people. In the early years of our work, I wanted to unlock the potential of recognising ourselves as part of an awesome evolutionary adventure; one that I felt could be brought to life in meaningful ways through taking action with others. When I came together with others who resonated with this motive, I felt what can best be described as champagne in my veins (Smit, 2001). Peter Gronn asks: "What are the kinds of circumstances which might necessitate leadership?" (2000, p.320). This compulsion born of inklings in my veins propelled me into leadership. This chapter introduces some of the challenges and seeming contradictions I have encountered practicing leadership within Global Generation. For example, I was drawn to the ecological metaphor of an organisation operating as an eco-system and yet it took individual drive it took to get projects started. Looking back at this time, I wondered if re-framing leadership within ecological and cosmic stories might help reconcile the different forces that run within me. While I am primarily writing about my own experience, I believe the process of integrating seemingly conflicting forces is good ground for the kind of leadership required to develop a socially and environmentally responsible future.

This chapter highlights two major themes that are interwoven through the rest of the thesis. One is leadership and the other is the potential of identifying with an evolving Universe Story. It took me eight years in the life of Global Generation to speak about myself as a leader and it also took me eight years to publically speak about the ancient and emerging story of evolution as an overarching context for my practice. It is in this context that my core inquiry question emerged: what are the implications for me of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe? It was an invitation to myself to embody and articulate leadership and the Universe Story as my story.

How it all began

A few months before embarking on the doctorate, I wrote a history of Global Generation, which I re-visited three years later. I was curious what the account would reveal about leadership.

The seeds for what was to become Global Generation were sown back in 2002. I was General Manager of a London-based arts organisation called Rise Phoenix. In the summer of that year I had the opportunity to go on camp with several artists and a group of children. We spent 4 days in a gorse and hawthorn copse in the middle of Pertwood Organic Farm in Wiltshire. We set up camp with a makeshift kitchen and borrowed tents. Little did we know that this would become the first of many subsequent camps and a foundational step for the birth of Global Generation just over a year later. Many of the children had never left London before, never seen the canopy of stars at night or heard the squeal of badgers in the undergrowth of the forest. During the time we were together I noticed attitudes shift from “I’m bored” to interest and engagement in the land. By the time we returned home, it felt like we were one group, which included the youngsters and the adults, the girls and the boys, the good kids and the bad kids. This left a mark on me and very soon I had pulled together a small group of friends who began to volunteer their time, to develop the campsite and run more camps.

Our commitment did not meet with enthusiasm in every quarter. One of the Rise Phoenix trustees and some of the artists worried that I was creating an overtly environmental organization. Confidence amongst paid members of the team was affected by the influx of so many volunteers; others worried about the liabilities of taking children away to camp. In hindsight what followed was a painful period of wading through dysfunctional organisational dynamics which I was poorly equipped to deal with. It was nonetheless a useful time of learning. To cut a long story short, the trustees of Rise Phoenix decided not to take responsibility for the campsite. This was the catalyst to set up a separate organisation to take the work forward. Some of the volunteers I had been involved with got on board with the idea and we came together to think about the kind of organisation we wanted to create, who to work with, where to work and most importantly why we wanted to do it and the kind of values we wanted to engender. Providing opportunities for people of all ages and circumstances to come together was to be an important aspect of the work. Whilst we were clear that we wanted to create an environmental education organisation, the discussion focused largely on finding ways to unlock potentials within people. This is why we came up with the name Global Generation. We wanted a name that spoke of an inner change of perspective as well as the outer changes we hoped to achieve. The word global

“indicates another perspective, a new consciousness and different awareness altogether.”⁷ It was this new level of awareness we wanted to generate.

All of us involved in defining the organisation felt that a core purpose was about growing a meaningful connection with the land. We agreed that this was not only about taking young people to the countryside but perhaps more importantly it was about unearthing the potentials of life beneath the concrete in the middle of the city. Donald Worster suggests that “mythologies create symbols and dreams for what to live by” (1977, p.20). Some stories in this thesis became signature stories for an organisational mythology that is about different people working together to open up new possibilities. How we came to work on rooftops and in the heart of a construction site are some of these stories:

One of our first London projects was on the roof of an office building. I wanted to use logs from Hampstead Heath, to recreate a feeling of the countryside in the city. This was met with disbelief by one of Global Generation’s co-founders, an old friend of mine who is English. She firmly said you can’t do that. There was the sense from her that I didn’t know the rules. Rebelliousness rose inside me. “Of course we can,” I asserted. I was aware of speaking with undue force; I wanted to prove it was possible. Three weeks later the Hampstead Heath conservation team was carrying logs and branches onto the roof of the office building and all for free.

Not long after the roof was established I noticed that the proposed King’s Cross development included a large number of bio-diverse ‘living roofs’. I was curious about potential connections and made a call to the developers. A few weeks later Roger Madelin, the CEO, met with me at The Office Group Roof. He liked the fact that we were, as he put it, demonstrating that business and activism didn’t have to be either end of the spectrum. He suggested I email him ideas about potential projects, which I did and sometimes he would reply. I also began my own back-up plan. This entailed attending events where I knew Roger would be speaking and catching a word with him in the break. Sometimes stubbornness pays off and this time it did. On one of these occasions he said to me that he had been thinking about the possibility of growing food on the back of flatbed lorries. A concern for developers and their investors is the risk that a community group might suddenly claim squatters’ rights, especially in the case of a garden that has a feeling of permanency. The next morning I called Paul Richens, our Gardens Manager, who came up with the idea of growing food in skips (dumpsters) – large enough to climb inside to garden effectively and portable. The idea stuck.

⁷

King 2008, p.44



Figure 5: Bio-diverse roof on The Office Group, Grays Inn Road, London

This was all occurring amidst a backdrop of intense financial uncertainty for Global Generation. Our reserves were depleted; we had enough money left for the next three months and that was it. I knew that if nothing significant happened on the money front we would go under. My hopes were pinned on a large three-year proposal we had submitted to the Big Lottery fund, but even then we would need to secure 50k of matched funding within a month. I received two phone messages. One informed me that we had good news from the Lottery. The other was from a representative the Guardian Newspaper who had recently

moved into the area. They were interested in bringing values alive for their staff by involving them in food growing in the local community. We decided the best way to promote the spirit of Global Generation to the Guardian was to have our young Generators (teenage youth leaders) write letters to the Guardian's Directors, which they did.

One thing you can rely on is our commitment; we are highly motivated generators with young fresh minds and ideas. We believe coming together, working and interacting with different people is the best way of making progress. In that way people will be more motivated, inspired and will be able to get the idea to the heart and not just the head - Zak, 16 years, April 2009.

Armed with the Generators' letters and some designs of the skips, I met with the then MD of the Guardian. Two years later he described our first meeting:

Global Generation turned up with a drawing of a garden in a skip and I laughed – I thought it was funny and brilliant and that we have to do this. So it took about a minute for me to be persuaded. What I loved is that it's like a dream thing but then they were actually serious about making it happen. That combination of dreaming something but being very practical in making it happen was extremely powerful – Tim Brooks, January 2011

The Guardian and the developers gave us the money we needed but most importantly they provided the right kind of platform to take the work forward. The experience of the rooftop garden fuelled my sense that I wanted young people to have the belief that they could make things happen. I wanted them to be not only pioneers in their imaginations but in the real nuts and bolts, cranes and concrete world. I wanted our gardens in the city, whether on top of an office building or in skips on developers' land, to be created through a collaborative process involving everyone. I wanted the work to be in the mainstream and I wanted us to feel comfortable at the tables of power.

How am I Leading?

According to my ADOC colleague Kathy Skeritt, the previous story shows me being an obstinate subversive, a mediator of complex systems, a leader of inspiration, a pragmatist and a power broker. I would not overtly sign up to many of these qualities and perhaps that is why I have hidden many of the ways I have found myself 'doing leadership'.

In 2004 I read *Leadership and the New Science* by Margaret Wheatley (1999). For a long time it was the only leadership book I owned. I returned to it again and again. Wheatley describes leadership in many organisations as still being based on the Newtonian idea of certainty that we live in a fixed and knowable universe:

As the earth circled the sun (just like clockwork), we grew assured of the role of determinism and prediction. We absorbed expectations of predictability into our very beings. And we organised work and knowledge based on our belief about this predictable universe (Wheatley 1999, p.28).

I can remember literally kissing the pages, thrilled by Wheatley's account of leadership in an organisation based on our more recent understanding of an emergent universe in which the future is not yet written.

I don't spend time anymore on elaborate plans and time lines. I want to use the time formerly spent on detailed planning and analysis to create the organisational conditions for people to set a clear intent, to agree on how they are going to work together, and then practice to become better observers, learners, and colleagues as they co-create with their environment (Wheatley 1999, p.46).

To put these ideas into practice was challenging on a number of fronts. Operating within the public sphere without being constrained by it often felt like a multi-lingual exercise. For starters, there was a need to jump through prescribed hoops to get money, legal consent and accreditation for programmes. On one hand promising set outcomes and outputs and, on the other hand, communicating that project plans would evolve through the relationship between everyone involved and our environment. Looking back in my journal from the time, I can see that there were a number of things going on, which was sometimes confusing for those I was involved with. On one hand I was interested in what would emerge through the relationship with others and at other times I would feel a burning, individual drive to make things happen, which I found hard to define or even speak about. For longer than I care to remember, establishing Global Generation was about spreadsheets and sleepless nights as I was constantly worried about funding. Looking back I think my insecurity reinforced the feeling that I needed to make things happen on my own. This hindered the growth of a shared sense of responsibility. I fell out badly with one of the original team over this.

While it was often challenging to navigate the different drives inside myself, I drew strength from the inconceivable time frames and unexpected ways change happened in Swimme and Berry's account of the Universe Story. I asked myself the question; how could I enable others to share ownership for the work if they had walked a different path to me? In

terms of the stories in this chapter, I am interested in the tension between the aspiration for collaboration that I felt in the Universe Story and the way I often adhered to an individual sense of conviction.

Identifying times I exercise leadership is a difficult endeavour and at best only a partial view (Gronn 2000; Ladkin 2010, 2013). It took gentle prodding by my doctoral supervisors for me to become interested in how I embody leadership. For example, in the viva for my doctoral transfer, Chris Seeley, who was an internal examiner said; “It’s clear that you are patrolling boundaries with an iron fist. I want to hear about the times you are dictatorial”. In the Skip Garden, the strongest boundaries are not set by walls and security gates but by a tacit sense of ethos. I paid attention to how I decided what would pass through the skip garden boundary.



Figure 6: J.R. with young Investment Bankers and Paul Richens

An investment Bank was about to pay for their graduates to spend a day in the Skip Garden. An email arrived from their Learning and Development Manager asking whether I would mind, due to dietary needs, if they ordered take-out pizza for the graduates instead of eating our home-cooked lunch made from Skip Garden produce. It came down to a strong gut feeling for me. As I read the email I felt and

heard myself say to my colleagues: “No, if they don’t want to enter into the spirit of what we are trying to do, I don’t want them with us, regardless of the money.” Understandably the bank had no prior context with which to relate to the work in the Skip Garden. It took a number of frustrating emails and a final phone call to reach an agreement that we would cook and eat together:

Jane: “There are a few key elements that have gone into creating a space in the middle of a construction site that enables positive values between people to flourish. As we are a food-growing site, cooking and eating together is a core part of our ethos. Stepping beyond the familiar business as usual offered by the high street is another important ingredient. In another context, I would have no problem with you bringing take out pizzas. However, in terms of keeping Global Generation’s foundation strong, I am not able to agree to your request”.

Learning and Development Manager for the Bank: “Thank you for coming back to me. I understand your view. As a compromise, would it be ok for us to have the pizza delivered and to eat food outside rather than bring it on site. Would this work?”

Jane (to the Global Generation team): “No!!” As the emails went back and forth, I asked the rest of the team what they thought about it. “I am with you 1000 percent if you cancel the day,” said Paul Richens, our Gardens Manager, “If you compromise on our ethos we have nothing.”

Donna Ladkin writes; “It would be more illuminating for leaders to ask those they ‘led’ about their experiences” (2010, p.37). As well as wanting to know about the ways in which I was dictatorial, I also wanted to know about the effect I had on others. I asked my colleague Nicole, about her experience of my leadership. Nicole had seen the growth of Global Generation from three people to more than ten. Remembering fallouts in the early days of the organisation I was anxious how I would respond to what might need to be said.

As we sat alongside each other in our office in the middle of the Skip Garden, I broached the subject: “As part of my doctoral research and the health of our work in general it would be good to find a time to speak about how you experience my leadership.” Nicole said she would think about it.

A few days after my question to Nicole, the two of us were in the Skip Garden kitchen having lunch. Nicole said, “I have been thinking more about your leadership and where I notice it”.

Nicole shone a light on several things that I had been wondering about. “One of the main things”, she said, “is that you are always on the ball about the methodology we use. When

other people lead things you have developed you are strict in a good way. For example, you insist that we should always book-end our sessions with reflective practice. You trust us to go out and do the work and give space for us to develop our own way of doing it, with your guidelines being there, otherwise it wouldn't be Global Generation's work".

I felt a combination of appreciation and reticence about Nicole's reference to Global Generation's work. How is Global Generations work defined and by who? Is there a danger that particular methods could become fixed and incarcerating? Her comment being 'strict in a good way' was to return to me over the months and years to come.⁸ I knew that I can be definite and I was curious about the effect this had; did it shut people down or did it provide helpful boundaries? "How do you experience my insistence, or even dictatorship, of certain principles?" Nicole replied: "In any conversation you have with anyone new you speak about the deeper side of the work, like in our interviews with people applying for jobs and it is in everything you write. The other way you do it, which is becoming more deliberate, is to create a space for people to think about these ideas for themselves, like the meditation and the engaged philosophy sessions⁹ and supporting Silvia and I to do the action research training at Ashridge".

It was good to hear Nicole speak about the value of investing in the staff team's own learning, which was a new step for the organization and I said to her, "I have seen how the work has flourished when I have had the chance to step back and think more abstractly. So I wondered what would happen if the whole team were given that space".

I appreciated Nicole's comments and I was aware that the question "how do you experience my leadership" is not simple. The power dynamics of a leader follower relationship are subtle and hidden. The nature of my role means I held more power than Nicole, which can get in the way of effective inquiry. Even though I shared this account with Nicole, I wondered if she felt free to talk to me, without the constraints of me being her boss. Was I subtly eliciting from her what I wanted to hear? How much did I selectively hear and report on our conversation? Was there a forum we could set up where the power dynamics of job hierarchy would fall away?

⁸ See chapter 5 - A difficult conversation and chapter 11 - Individually and Collectively

⁹ See chapter 5 - Sharing Ownership

From Small Stories to a Big Story

For many years I was tentative about sharing my interest in an evolving story of the universe as a meaningful story for social and environmental change. Sometimes I tried and my words met blank and bewildered faces. For some years my husband Rod Sugden had been giving Universe Story lessons to his primary school classes and the children had shown a lot of enthusiasm for it. In 2012 I invited Rod to co-lead a Big Bang Summer School with me in the Skip Garden. Even before the project began we sensed a new level of engagement between the participants. I wrote the following journal entry, a few days before the project started. We were in a planning meeting with tutors and students from The University of the Arts who were collaborating with us on the project.

J.R. Journal – July 16th, 2012

The context of what we were doing as we sat in a little porta-cabin in the middle of a construction site got bigger and bigger. I spoke about stepping beyond specialism to a more integrated and cross disciplinary way of working. One of the students shared her excitement in recognising the same principles at work on different scales in the universe; from the cosmic to the human. I felt no cynicism in the room. Afterwards Rod described, "Everyone started to contribute to the conversation. There was a fire between us which grew as each person spoke. It felt like the universe wanted us to tell its story. It wanted to be talked about and it wanted as many different people from different walks of life to tell it".

This journal entry was written in the excitement of the moment. To an academic reader it could sound fanciful to experience a shared, bigger and more creative context that felt like fire. For me it was significant that (if even for a few brief moments) our limited and separate sense of self was penetrated. The most important thing was that the dialogue laid a foundation for creative collaboration during the project. Over eight days Rod and I and our colleagues introduced a 14-billion-year story to twelve young people aged between 11 and 16 and many of Global Generation's King's Cross collaborators including scientists, artists and construction workers. The project involved arts and science activities, creative writing, building, gardening, discussion and public speaking, all interwoven with sitting in silence and stillness. Ben Okri writes:

It is important that we don't become machines; that we don't become computers. We contain machines, we contain computers. We contain all of nature, the mountains, the constellations and the infinite spaces (2015, p.8).

Rather than trying to shoehorn a big story into a small context, this time the story of our evolving universe was the primary theme; an overarching narrative which was big

enough to contain many small stories. One of the ways we helped participants to step into the story as our own story was to introduce discussions on the values in the universe followed by free fall writing. We encouraged participants to write in the first person, imagining themselves as different stages in the journey of the universe. The writing produced revealed a shift of identity in which a separate sense of self expanded into a boundaryless and creative process.

When I began I felt like I had to be open-minded because if I was open-minded I could allow myself to develop and grow bigger. I also had to have the initiative to expand and grow otherwise nothing would have changed. I needed to be independent and rely only myself because there was nothing else at the time - Muslima 11 years.

For me this was indicative of the kind of education that I had hoped to offer when setting up Global Generation. One always runs the risk of selective representation, and I note that some participants did not engage. That being said, it might be helpful for you the reader to see what others observed:

From a local photographer:

Something different happens to the kids here, it's just mind blowing watching them take an incredibly complex topic like the beginning of the universe or understanding DNA, that most of us have difficulty grasping. And here we have eleven year olds that in a matter of days are able to articulate it and write about it. I can see how they are taking on and feeling the responsibility, to take things forward. Recently I was feeling despondent about bankers but these kids give you hope that the world can change - Mo Grieg, August 31st, 2012.

From Global Generation's Office Manager:

Something about the atmosphere in the Skip Garden seems different this week. There is a sense of inspiration in the air. I watch around me and see young students learning about the Universe. I have sat in on some of the sessions, engaged and conversed with the young people, and been moved and enriched by their presence and personal enquiries into the topics being covered. It's true that talking about how the Universe began can bring up contention and opposition, different people holding different beliefs. Bringing

this discussion forward at earlier stages, more as an add-on to other projects it felt quite tentative. But now, in this format it has grown feet. It has become a building block, a more solid platform for many features that we already involve people in, such as creativity, curiosity and independence. The young people have been showing this in bucket loads. They are engaged, lively and serious. – Manpreet Dhatt, Global Generation Project Assistant, July 28th, 2012.

Our final showcase included parents and our local business collaborators. Afterwards many of the adults involved commented that they had now learnt how to relate to the Universe Story as their own story.



Figure 7: Invitation for the Big Bang Summer School Celebration

Linking Practice to Literature

Despite the vast body of literature, contemporary scholars have recognised the difficulty, and some would say impossibility, of studying the invisible phenomenon of leadership. Consequently very few researchers agree on what leadership actually is (Gronn 2000; Jackson and Parry 2011; Ladkin 2010; Alvesson and Sveningsson 2011). Jackson and

Parry describe changes in leadership research that resonate with my own practice of learning about leadership through standing back and looking at my experience, warts and all (2011, p.10). They say the self-exploration involved in autoethnography is particularly appropriate for a practice-based doctorate. Compared to all the espoused theories and numbers of people in leadership roles, I note that there are relatively few accounts by people writing about their own lived experience of leadership. Ciulla paints an extreme picture claiming that, until recently, most research on ethics in leadership was based on a few questionnaires instigated by a field highly dominated by social scientists (2014, p.11). Ciulla goes on to say that the situation is changing, thanks to the introduction of new journals, with a humanities orientation, that welcome leadership research from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives (2014, p.28).

Earlier I describe how in setting up Global Generation I was influenced by Margaret Wheatley, who stresses that the leader's role is to create the conditions for emergence. Despite a tendency and arguably a need to be single minded, I was interested in how an organisation could cultivate the emergent and collaborative properties of an ecosystem. Wheatley highlights how ecology provides the metaphorical ground for collaborative and emergent forms of leadership:

Life's process for change is termed emergence, and it is how local efforts achieve global impact. In nature change never happens as a result of top-down, preconceived strategic plans or from the mandate of any single individual or boss ... Emergent phenomena always have these characteristics: They are much more powerful than the sum of their parts; they always possess capacities that are different from the local actions that engendered them; they always surprise us by their appearance (2007, pp.177-178).

Wheatley's description gives the impression that emergence within a collective just happens. Drawing on Jantsch, she refers to the inherent orderliness of nature's dynamic systems and writes compellingly of the potential that becomes available when we let go of control (1999, p.25). It made for encouraging reading when I set out on the task of establishing an organisation. In hindsight I feel Wheatley's account is over-idealised and short on descriptions of how this has been applied in practice. My experience has been a process of holding intention, often missing my target, and new possibilities opening up through my mistakes. In this process I have a sense of life wanting to flourish but not necessarily in a way I had previously imagined, "one that would make it possible for us to suppose that some sort of intelligible directional tendencies may be operative in the world without our having to suppose that they determine all things" (Polanyi and Prosch 1975, p.162). There is resonance here with Swimme and Tucker who describe how nature works.

"The forms of creativity that pervade nature are neither haphazard nor determined but are, rather, profoundly exploratory" (2011, p.53). Nature's way of creating is "different from that of an engineer constructing something with a blueprint in hand" (Ibid, p.53). In many regards I feel I have had a foot in both worlds. On one hand I worried about spread sheets and outcomes to ensure we had money to let us take action and on the other hand, in setting up Global Generation and still now, I experience an overriding pull towards something that has no pre-determined outcome. It has been both an individual and a collective process. I maintain that seeing ourselves and what we are part of as a vast interconnected evolving 'story' provides the imaginative confidence to step beyond what we already know.

We must loosen ourselves from the forces underlying the already made and step more directly into the perpetual flow of the being made (Bergson 1983, p.237).

In the following chapter I will describe Bergson's orientation, in terms of process philosophy. My colleagues at Global Generation are not necessarily interested in philosophical framing. However in their own way many of them have described the essence of what a process orientation means to me. Our chair of trustees has had a career running an international trust company for a major global bank. He wrote an article on our website about why he was attracted to join Global Generation:

The real attraction is something almost unwritten. GG has a plan of where it is going over the next few years, but this is not set in stone. It will be changed and modified, improved upon and reworked by everyone involved in some way... AND THAT'S NOT JUST OK, IT'S WHAT GG IS ABOUT. The end result is not a vision we can see yet. We can set out the framework to get there, but the contributions made during the journey will shape something new and quite unusual, and being part of that changing and uncertain future is exciting. Few organisations are brave enough to set out not knowing exactly where they will end up, and how others will influence them on that journey, but we will. - Anthony Buckland, July 10th, 2012.

Flourishing in an un-fixed context has not been a solo affair. The experience of the 2012 summer school gave me confidence in the creative potential that can emerge between people if the conditions are right. I see this as an objective-subjective experience which aligns with David Bohm's description of dialogue

It's not like a mob where the collective mind takes over. It is something between the individual and the collective. It can move between them. It's a harmony of the individual and collective, in which the whole constantly moves towards coherence, so there is both a collective mind and an individual mind, and like a stream, the flow moves between them (Bohm 1996, p.31).

Summary

The signature stories in this chapter formed a personal mythology that says a lot more than I think is possible. Some of the stories like the Pizza Story became part of a shared organisational mythology that valued the atmosphere in the Skip Garden over material things. Other stories needed to change to enable a shift from a singular to a more collaborative type of leadership. For this I found it helpful to embrace the macro and the micro. In other words I worked with the story of the universe and I examined the day-to-day challenges of a highly localised leadership experience.

Highlighting tensions and times of inspiration in the leadership accounts shared in this chapter, including the discussion I had with Nicole, seeded questions that surfaced further inquiry over the months ahead. For example; what were Global Generation's values and how was our ethos defined? Could I find a generative balance between individual and collaborative leadership? I also became more interested in the shadows in myself that inhibited collaboration. The excitement of the dialogue in the summer school spoke to me of a more collaborative kind of leadership, infused with the awe, wonder and mystery of the cosmos.

Within the stories of leadership that I have shared, it became clear that the implications for me of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe related to identity, ways of knowing and values which inform the inquiry presented in subsequent chapters.

- Identity: moving from the Newtonian idea of being a separate entity living within a fixed and knowable universe to a felt and cognitive sense of being part of an ancient and emerging universe process with no pre-determined outcome.
- Ways of Knowing: Rather than the rational analysis derived from an engineer's blueprint, I found my way forward through a more intangible feeling sense, which I have pointed to in metaphorical terms; for example, champagne in my veins, fire between people.

- Values: Throughout the rest of this inquiry I unearth and challenge inherited mechanistic values of control, already knowing and separation from land and people in order to embrace values that I maintain are inherent in an evolving story of the universe, such as diversity and relationship, creativity and emergence.

I am not interested in leadership as an end in itself. This chapter lays out the underpinning territory of leadership in service of wholeness. It also highlights ways in which I experienced wholeness as a foundation for collaboration; in other words the experiential understanding that we are all connected within a creative life process that has been reaching forward and exploring new possibilities for billions of years. This perspective values being and becoming, which are the hallmarks of process philosophy (Whitehead 1978). The next chapter expands on this.

Chapter 4 – Worldviews and The Universe Story

I believe that only through recalling the deeper sources of our present world and worldview can we hope to gain the self-understanding necessary for dealing with our current dilemmas (Tarnas 1991, p.xi).

Framing History

I found it helpful to consider history, particularly the trajectory of dominant western thinking, in order to understand the question “What are the implications for me of leadership situated within an evolving story of the universe?” In this chapter I discuss why deriving values and meaning from nature and the wider universe lost favour. I also look at the consequent effect of considering nature as mechanical and meaningless. Taylor writes that the past is ‘sedimented’ in the present and elaborates that we are “doomed to misidentify ourselves, as long as we can’t do justice to where we come from” (2007, p.29). This chapter introduces worldviews that have coloured and shaped who I am; the enchanted view of early peoples, the mechanistic view of colonialism and a more recent constructive post-modern view (Griffin, Cobb, Ford, Gunter 1993) of the universe as a story which marries scientific understanding of evolutionary cosmology with the way earlier peoples found meaning in the natural world. I chart the environment that shaped what can broadly be categorised as process philosophy (Ibid); an approach which underpins the body of work I refer to as the Universe Story.

The presentation of this chapter reflects an arguably linear view of development which suggests that humans evolved through different worldviews: pre-modern, modern, postmodern, post-postmodern. Before going any further I want to point out that I have reservations about placing my experience within a view that is at best broad-brush and at worst reductionist; hence I proceed with caution. A frame of linear development also makes several assumptions that are rightly contested by Indigenous peoples and de-colonial thinkers. For example, it is a Eurocentric view that assumes the story of history can be told in one coherent narrative about a self-actualising human subject who is part of a developing world (Smith 2012). The Western idea of a coherent narrative means that basic assumptions, such as the idea of progress and development can easily go unquestioned (Eisenstein 2014). Through reading Mānuka Henare’s (2003) account of Māori historical method I came to appreciate the value of different peoples holding different views of history. For example, it is accepted that each Māori tribe will hold their own story of history.

I work with the notion of paradigm in the context of a cultural worldview. Thomas Kuhn (1962) maintained that different scientific paradigms are incommensurable; in other words there is no common measure from which they can speak to each other. A core question in this chapter concerns how I could find a way for different worldviews to be commensurate, at least in terms of understanding the different forces within myself. In later chapters I reveal how understanding and empathising with the worldview of my forebears enabled me to look into different parts of myself that were affecting leadership.

In the previous chapter I described how during the Big Bang Summer School I had encouraged the children to write about events in the journey of the universe in the first person. In an effort to experience for myself the different worldviews discussed in this chapter, I wrote micro-stories in which I imagined how different peoples made sense of the world. I chose to write from the cosmology of the time in order to explore Richard Tarnas's (2006) claim that major paradigm shifts have come about through changes in our cosmological story. I instinctively developed this imaginative form of inquiry as a way of closing the gap between the scientific view of knowledge as detached observation and personal embodied experience. "All (real) knowing is personal – participation through indwelling" (Polanyi and Prosch 1975, p.44). My understanding deepened through dwelling in an imagined way with what I was writing about.

An Enchanted Story

Imagining, while taking evening walks across Hampstead Heath with my husband Rod, and then writing the micro-stories in this chapter, was a form of indwelling which enabled me to empathise with the sentiments of early peoples. I engaged with the land under my feet, the stars above my head and everything in between, in a more potent way.

Walking through Hampstead Heath the trees come alive – I notice a gnarled blackened one with a branch sheared off; perhaps it has been struck by lightning. What had the tree done to displease the Gods? I imagine the life of my pre-modern ancestors ... the many acts of Gods that determined their successes and their failures: the plagues of locusts, the crops that were small and rotten, the loss of multiple children. I look up at the stars and begin to make out shapes that speak of superhuman personalities. Compared to my candlelight they are dazzling and bright. The hunter Orion with his belt of stars is in full view tonight. Is he watching over or glaring down upon me? I feel strengthened with an ancient sense that the stars are part of me. My pace slows... reverence engulfs me and I approach the crest of the hill walking in the silent footsteps

of my ancestors. I stand still amidst an arrangement of stones; symbols of the sacred. I hope that the stones will bring fortune. I tread carefully on the ground so as not to disturb the demons in the underworld. Tomorrow when I see the sun travelling around the earth I will get firewood, but I will only take from selected trees, so as not to displease the Gods of the forest. I look up at Orion, on his left leg Rigel is shining brightly; his light kindles honour and responsibility in me. He, like all the other stars, looks down upon the earth which is the centre of the universe¹⁰

The pre-modern world is referred to as enchanted in that it was “permeated with spiritual, mythic, theistic, and other humanly meaningful categories” (Tarnas 1997, p.326). I use the term pre-modern broadly. The following comments do not apply to all peoples living before the period we now consider as modern. However it is commonly understood that early Indigenous peoples oriented themselves by rivers, mountains and trees (Walker 1990, p.70) and what they saw in the night sky. Their “deep drive to participate in the universe led to the creation of stories and myths - the planets were persons, the stars were kin, the Sun was a God” (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.37). In the enchanted world the boundary between the human mind and the world was porous (Taylor 2007, p.27). As in fairy tales, extra human and intangible intra-cosmic subjects were imbued with power and significance.

To walk in a fairy tale then is to walk through a landscape filled with cryptic presences; faces are decipherable in the trunks of trees: beings dwell under every toadstool, ants are helpful and grottoes speak. To enter this landscape is to enter a field of subjectivity, in which everything is already alive with a life of its own or charged with the psychic energy of the world at large (Mathews 2003, p.18).

Mathews describes how enchantment means to be wrapped in a song or incantation in which human–earth encounters invoke an exchange of subjectivity:

The world is experienced as enchanted when it has been invoked, awoken by self... and self is in turn enchanted by its engagement with an awakened world (Mathews 2003, p.18).

In a similar vein, Thomas Berry writes; “universe or *universa* is a turning back from the many to the one” (Berry 2006, p.114). He describes how early peoples understood this: “They constantly evoked their self-consciousness within their universe consciousness. The one had no meaning without the other.” In 1949 Jean Gebser described the pre-modern as pre or un-perspectival:

¹⁰

Account influenced by Doty 2000; Mathews 2003; Taylor 2007; Tarnas, 2006

Man's lack of spatial awareness is attended by a lack of ego-consciousness, since in order to objectify and qualify space, a self-conscious I is required that is able to stand opposite of and confront space (1985, p.10).

The kind of power that comes through individuation and observation was not yet in our experience in a pre-modern world. Along with feeling empowered by a connection to the whole, I imagine we would have felt fear at our lack of control; "vulnerable to a world of spirits and powers" (Taylor 2007, p.27). In small but significant ways relics of a former way of thinking coloured my own upbringing. I think of the rituals surrounding the Catholic mass which I attended each Sunday with my family and on Fridays as part of my primary school education.

Kneeling for what seemed like an eternity I was invited to focus on Christ's body and blood in the form of the Eucharist. I wanted to be present for that moment, I mean really present. When the dry, cardboard-like wafer would land on my tongue, I wanted to be transformed by it. I also wanted to find out for myself what was true. Gently I would close my teeth around the wafer, "I'm going to bite you Jesus", I said in my head. Slowly moving my teeth against his flesh I felt the sensation of his heart beating." It's true, I could really feel he was alive", I would tell my friends.

"It wasn't so easy to revolt, to reject magic in the enchanted world. This was a world full of dark magic, which only white magic could keep at bay" (Taylor 2007, p.73). Fear was compounded by disasters such as war, famine and above all the Black Death (Ibid, p.88). Stephen Toulmin writes of the reactions of 17th century philosophers to pre-modern views:

The vast cobweb of cosmic interactions that grew up around the traditional world picture was a product of fertile imaginations rather than of controlled study and observations (Toulmin 1985, p.X).

The important role imagination has played in shaping my research could invite the same criticisms.

A Mechanical Story

In contrast to the pre-modern world in which our identity was inseparably connected to nature and the wider cosmos, the modern mind was empowered in new ways "through focussing on parts rather than the whole" (Gunter 1993, p.158). The stars are no longer the gods, we can now see through the power of our telescopes that they are "giant balls of gas" (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.27) and the planets, including our own, rotate around the sun.

This shift to a mechanical world of separate parts was catalysed by Copernicus's confirmation in the 15th Century that instead of being at the centre of the universe, the earth was part of a sun-centred solar system. In an effort to provide a physical explanation for this new heliocentric universe in the 17th Century, Rene Descartes described nature as a great unfeeling machine, strictly arranged by mathematical law and controlled by an external creator. This created the psycho-physical split between mind and matter known as the Cartesian split (Griffin 1993; Tarnas 1991). Descartes crystallised the notion that man and nature were two separate things and in this light a meaningful cosmos faded. We found ourselves in a cosmic chill (Burroughs as cited by Worster 1977, p.17). We lost our ecology and our cosmology and in that sense we also lost our story. The universe became strange to us and we became strange to the universe (Levi as cited by Tarnas 2006, p.30). With no sense of intelligent life left, other than in the mind of the privileged human, our job was to command and control.

Descartes' division freed matter from religious concern so that it could be explored by an objectifying scientific method. This enabled science and the technical age to progress in previously unimaginable directions. No longer beholden to inherited stories of a cosmos imbued with magical forces of good and evil, we became empowered through our own powers of observation. Over time the scientific profession was treated as a cauldron of certainty; even though science supposedly stood for "a method and no fixed beliefs" (James as cited by Ford 1993, p.106). Understanding through myths and legends and deriving meaning from the land and the wider cosmos was seen as irrational and primitive (Griffin 1993, p.16). Did we fear that we would be drawn back into the tyranny of our past? In this new and seemingly liberating age of discovery, issues of meaning and purpose that were considered important to previous generations of scientists were now "side-lined as metaphysical and problematic" (Kuhn 1962, p.37).

Our loss of a meaningful and participative relationship with the land finds roots in the ethics of Aristotle who made it clear that human potential could flourish only in the *civility* of the city or polis. He advocated that the city should reflect the order of the heavens, hence the word cosmopolis. Life in the forest was savage and untamed, lacking the law and order of the modern state that was capable of remoulding society (Taylor 2007, p.99-100). For me cosmology speaks of the whole of things. However one cannot assume, as in Aristotle's case, that a cosmic view includes an ecological view, hence I included 'ecological story' alongside 'cosmic story' to the title of this thesis. Descartes' division reinforced and extended the duality of Aristotle's ideas: "Most things, including all non-human animals, were

regarded as more or less complex arrangements of extended, non-feeling things” (Ford 1993, p.97). Human beings however were metaphysically different; we had a soul and a subjective interior that deemed us masters of the earth (Ford 1993, p.97). This attitude can be seen in the promotional literature for new settlers in New Zealand. Edward Gibbon Wakefield¹¹ writes: “God has empowered man... to fashion nature... as to draw from her hidden elemental forms of far greater beauty and utility than, in her present state of imperfection, are offered to us by nature herself” (as cited in Park 1995, p.324). This was the utopian sentiment of the Arcadian dream in which the pastoral idyll combined with an appetite for the spoils of a rising global trade. It was a creed of imposing a hyper-productive and artificial aesthetic on the land, which coloured the lives of the first Europeans in New Zealand and their descendants (Beattie 2014; Fairbairn 1989 and Park 1995).

I encounter echoes of this idealised and hyper-productive way of being in the present. In New Zealand, conservation efforts in many places are restoring native forest and bird populations. However in a country built on the sale of agricultural commodities, progress is often seen in terms of productivity.

J.R. Journal – February 28th, 2014

Ruamahanga

First morning here and the natural thing is to go running ... running into my 'favourite place': the less farmed, or so I thought, accretion along the edge of the Ruamahanga River. As I approach I am met by a uniform shade of green, one paddock to the next; choumoellier, a kind of brassica, is being grown. This cabbage-like plant is fodder for the sheep and cattle. To the farmer this is progress and yet my heart sank. I always felt this place was safe. I missed meandering through and noticing the variety of plants underfoot. Now I navigate the pasture and try and find a natural path through the crop. The strip of wild beside the river is narrower now. I hear no birds singing. Something of the place is gone for me. I returned back to the house and spoke to my mother. “That sounds good,” she said, “the place is producing.” Overshadowed by the large overdraft that many New Zealand farms labour under, I understood her response. It’s about surviving, but I couldn’t join her.

A Living Universe

Process philosophy is a long-standing philosophical tradition most commonly associated with Alfred North Whitehead, who viewed himself as an organicist. As a

¹¹ My great-great grandfather, Daniel Riddiford, worked for Edward Gibbon Wakefield.

philosophy, it has its roots in the pre-Socratic writings of Heraclites. Whitehead and other process philosophers such as William James and Henri Bergson reacted against the modernist worldview that was present in much of Europe in late 1800s. As I have described, it was a time in which many people regarded material reality as a strictly mechanical realm. I use the term process philosophy in the way it has been summarised by David Griffin (1993). It is a worldview in which the process of change, which is referred to by Whitehead as becoming, is more fundamental than the notion of being in a fixed unchanging state. This aligns with Bergson's "perpetual flow of the being made" (1983, p.237). The fundamental reality as William James (as cited by Griffin 1993) described it is that everything is an experiential event which is influenced by the past, has a measure of freedom in the present and makes a contribution to the future.

The air is cool as we make our way towards Parliament Hill, the highest part of Hampstead Heath. Rod is animatedly telling me about the emergence of the eye in the evolutionary story, the compound eyes of flies and lobsters and the watery eyes of worms and fish. He tells me how the amphibian eye is familiar to us because we share a common ancestry with fish.¹² I look up and am mesmerized; it is like looking along a time line. First the black silhouettes of the trees and then at the very end there is a view of London: tall structures ablaze with dazzling white lights topped by red beacons. It's getting dark and as we reach the top of the hill, I notice it takes effort to look away from the city and turn my attention upwards to the stars. I persevere and with the help of Rod's powerful new binoculars I gradually make out the shapes of the constellations: the Gemini twins, Pollux and Castor are there and following the arc of the Big Dipper, Arcturus comes into view. I now understand in a scientific way that stars are my ancestors and that my body is made of elements forged in the stars.

Lying on the grass looking up at the stars, I feel connected through time and space and think about how it must have been for my early human ancestors whose creation stories revolved around our relationship to the stars, the mountains and the trees. These stories carried values for how to live.

Back in the 1600s John Donne mournfully wrote: "Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone" (cited by Toulmin 1990, p.64). My view is that thanks to our compartmentalised, specialised world the enchantment of the whole which we "dimly experience in magic" (Gebser 1985 translation, p.529), re-emerged though the lenses of our telescopes and microscopes. This time around a sense of the whole came not in the form of evocative

¹² Swimme and Tucker 2011.

stories but through observable scientific method (Swimme 2013). The challenge is how to find *meaning* in what our telescopes and equations are revealing. The process philosophers offered such meaning, they held that “ontology and cosmology were primary” (Cobb 1993, p.179). They have been called constructive postmodernists (Griffin 1993) because they were “metaphysically inclined scientists who sought to co-join the scientific picture of evolution with philosophical and religious conceptions of an underlying spiritual reality” (Tarnas 1991, p.383). Referring to Lyotard (1979), Reason and Bradbury describe the deconstructive postmodern view as one in which “we must be suspicious of all overarching theories and paradigms – incredulous towards meta-narratives” (2001, p.6). Such wariness is understandable, given that we have been burnt by the polemic of single stories produced by Hitler and other 20th century dictators. Political historian Louis Herman points out: “the grand narratives of the past were based on the fixed meta-narratives of Descartes’ and Newton’s mechanical universe” (2013, p.580). The Universe Story is an evolving story in which there is infinitely more we don’t know than that we do know. In contrast to Descartes’ proclamation that humans are the only sentient beings in a mechanical world of unfeeling things (Griffin 1993), William James describes how the different parts of nature are not vacuous but are “something for themselves in the sense of having experience” (Griffin 1993, p.1). Bergson writes of *élan vital*; the life force. He insists that ‘vitalism’ is responsible for the incessant creativity of life (Gunter 1993, p.142). Vitalism carries a sense of the sacred and has a dynamic quality, both still and moving through all things. Mānuka Henare equates Bergson’s sense of vitalism with the traditional Māori belief that creation is a dynamic movement, “out of the nothingness, into the night, into the world of light” (2001, p.198). I describe vitalism as a life positive force. Bergson maintained that we carry a deep sense of kinship with other species, even those far removed from us on the evolutionary tree. This is because we have evolved together and derive ultimately from common ancestors. Unlike his contemporaries, Bergson insisted that we must see anthropology, history and sociology against an evolutionary background which encouraged an environmental ethic:

Two factors, at least, dictate the usefulness of process postmodern philosophies to environmentalism: the appeal to process as the fundamental reality out of which things are made and the insistence of the organic (profoundly relational) nature of reality (Gunter 1993, p.158).

I find it significant that between 1900 and 1950 Bergson and Whitehead were two of the few prominent philosophers to mention problems of food, population, and environmental degradation (Gunter 1993).

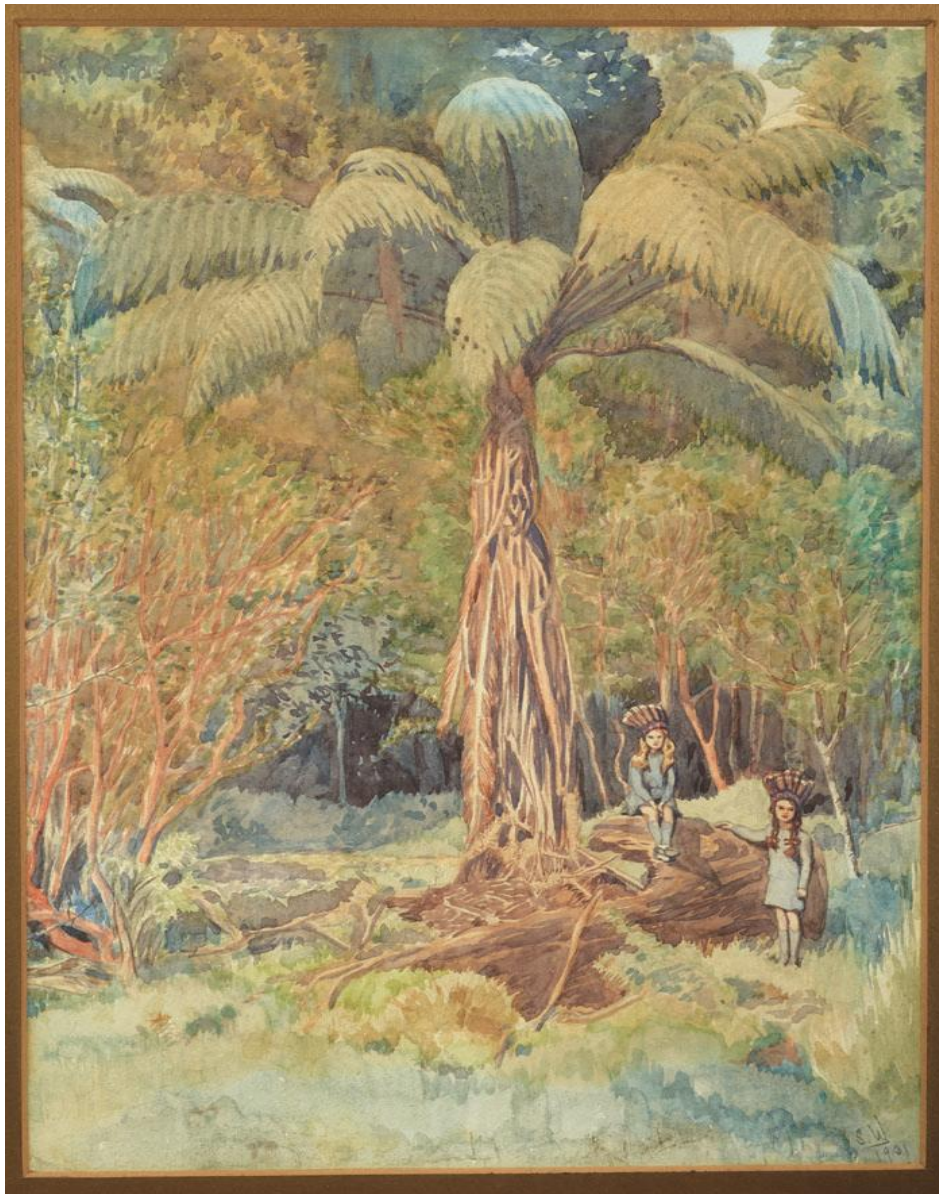


Figure: 8: Margaret and Yvonne Westmacott in the Rangitoto Bush circa 1930

Two paintings hang on the wall of my mother's sitting room. The fact that they are next to each other tells a story. One, painted by my grandfather Spencer Westmacott (S.W.) is of two small girls, my mother Yvonne and her sister Margaret, under a huge ponga fern (*Cyathea dealbata*) in the middle of the native bush where they spent much of their childhood. The other painting is of a cathedral tower, which stretches up towards the sky. It was painted by S.W's grandfather, the sculptor Sir Richard Westmacott. Looking at the paintings of the bush and the cathedral I am struck by the dichotomy between so-called

civilised and primitive views of spirituality (Spiller 2010) and so-called civilised and primitive views of land. The juxtaposition of the pictures speaks to me of a view that confined the sacred to man-made structures and which eclipsed the ability to feel spirituality in the natural world.

Appreciating the earth and insisting that mountains, rivers and trees were imbued with a divine force, created difficulties for Teilhard de Chardin, who was a Jesuit priest, during the first half of the 20th century. I know my Father a committed Catholic who died when I was eleven, was aware of Teilhard. I would love to know how he viewed Teilhard, especially as The Catholic Church banned all publication of Teilhard's work during his lifetime. It was a time when most religious people in the Judeo-Christian tradition believed that the mystical had little to do with the earth but existed only on an abstract, spiritualized level. For Teilhard, spiritual power was not the exclusive domain of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost trinity. Ursula King suggests that Teilhard's approach was more akin to the natural mysticism of the pantheist: "every reality, every experience is rooted in the texture of the living cosmos from which it draws its life and nourishment" (King 1996, p.87). As Teilhard wrote: "Two ideals, two conceptions of the Divine, are confronting one another... A religion of the earth is being mobilized against the religion of heaven" (Ibid, p.170). Bergson's vitalism had an impact on Teilhard, whose ideas and intuitive sense of the divine within evolution came together when he read Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1911):

This book made him discover the dynamic pattern and rhythm running through the whole universe (King 1996, p.35).

In reading Henri Bergson's newly published *Creative Evolution*, Teilhard encountered a thinker who dissolved the Aristotelian dualism of matter and spirit in favour of a movement through time of an evolving universe (Grim and Tucker 1984, p.4).

Teilhard wrote passionately about how humans and all of life have evolved as part of one unified event which contains both material and psychic dimensions. For Teilhard the evolutionary view of developmental time radically changed "our understanding of ourselves in the universe" (Ibid).

For our age to have become conscious of evolution means something very different from and much more than having discovered one further fact... It means (as happens with a child when he acquires the sense of perspective) that we have become alive to a new dimension. The idea of evolution is not, as sometimes said, a mere hypothesis, but a condition of all experience (Teilhard de Chardin 1968, p.193).

The way Teilhard articulated this 'new cosmological story' had a profound effect on cultural historian Thomas Berry. Reality was no more the inert meaningless universe of the

mechanists. Humans as conscious beings, having evolved from the earth, are intimately connected to the earth and to some form of creative consciousness within the whole of the continuously unfolding evolutionary process. Teilhard's view of the universe as creative process marks a shift away from the redemptive and controlling Christian narrative which was based on the Augustine belief that human beings are born with the sin of Adam and have an in-built urge to do bad things, which needs controlling (Armstrong 2009, p.122).

Whilst deeply influenced by Teilhard's ideas, Berry was also critical. He was concerned about the overly anthropocentric tenor of Teilhard's thinking, which inflated notions of our power to build the future.

So entranced with the glory of the human, Teilhard however had no awareness of the increasing desolation of the earth ... This was outside his concern. He took no notice of the conservation movements that had already begun in his time. Nor did Teilhard perceive that the pressures he invoked to achieve the ultra-human were themselves supporting a general economic and social development leading to ecological disaster and to a diminishment of the human quality of life (Berry 1982, p.3).

Even though he lived and travelled extensively in Asia and perhaps because of the severe restrictions imposed on him by the Vatican, Teilhard remained strongly attached to the unique revelation provided by Christianity and was unappreciative of Asian religions or Indigenous traditions, an approach that contrasts strongly with the all-embracing view of Berry:

Rather than seeing evolutionary processes culminating in humanity's control over "spaceship Earth," as de Chardin did, Berry came to view humanity's role as increasingly problematic. Whereas de Chardin's thinking was both anthropocentric and Christocentric, Berry's was biocentric and broadly ecumenical, based on an understanding that human beings were but part of the larger biotic community (Chapman 2009, p.13).

Very much a man of his time, Teilhard saw his work as science whereas Thomas Berry explicitly saw his contribution as story. Berry brought Teilhard's work forward in a culturally inclusive way, by "balancing Teilhard's technological optimism with ecological realism" (Grim and Tucker 2010, p.8).

For me one of Berry's most significant contributions is the extension of Teilhard's work into a new form of contemporary creation story, which changes the social implications of what it means to be human. Together with Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry wrote of

¹³ <http://www.fogcityjournal.com/wordpress/1306/a-tribute-to-thomas-berry-1914-2009-prophet-of-the-ecozoic-era/>

entrancement through a sense of belonging, as an energetic foundation for taking responsibility for the earth and the whole of the evolutionary process; a quality I associate with enchantment.

Without entrancement within this new context of existence it is unlikely that the human community will have the psychic energy needed for the renewal of the Earth (Swimme and Berry 1992, p.268).

Both Berry and Swimme call upon the potential for social and environmental action by unlocking an older, deeper, more connected sense of who we are. In response to the magnitude of social, political and environmental problems in the early 1970s, Berry began contemplating what he referred to as the 'New Story':

It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story (1988, p.123).

While I agree with Berry's sentiment, I am uncomfortable with the term 'New Story'. It seems to me that Berry is calling for an integration of scientific discovery with earlier and more enchanted ways of knowing. For this reason I prefer to describe the Universe Story as an ancient and emerging story.

Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker were motivated by Berry's call to bring science and humanities together in an integrated cosmology that could guide humans into the next period of human–Earth relations. Their book (and film of the same name) 'Journey of the Universe' (2011) is the main text we have drawn on for Global Generation's Universe Story work. Their words speak of a strong identification with the journey of the universe as our shared story. This evokes resonance that goes beyond intellectual understanding. It is a felt response which brings together seemingly separate parts into an interconnected and creative process. In his description of indwelling, Polanyi goes some way to describe the effect I experienced on reading "Journey of the Universe":

We cease to look at objects severally and become immersed in them. They lose their usual meaning and are merged with the unfathomable intuition of the universe (Polanyi and Prosch 1975, p.128).

I feel it is the identification with a greater whole that enables Swimme and Tucker to integrate, as opposed to traverse, the boundaries of different disciplines. Significantly this bridges the entrenched divide between science and religion. They achieve a powerful marriage of the mythic and scientific that combines recent discovery with the wisdom of early peoples, grounded in the call for social and environmental action.

A cross-boundary approach aligns with the autoethnographical invitation to write in a multi-voiced way. I integrate different literary devices, different ways of knowing and different value systems. Facing into different parts of myself has helped me empathise with others, which supports working across boundaries, particularly when I meet with people who hold different worldviews. Most crucially, however, I have drawn upon an intuited and vitalist sense of life that runs beneath the parts. I honour earth's embedded rhythms as codes for how to live and in this spirit I have often described myself as a social ecologist (McIntosh 2008). However Jean Houston's (2012) description of a social artist comes closer to what being a social ecologist means to me in practice.

A social artist is someone who can enter into different cultures and organisations and cross the great divide of otherness by having leaky margins to other people's beliefs, style and ways of knowing (Houston 2012¹⁴).

Houston goes on to describe how a social artist is a healer in an evolutionary sense, in that they heal by making whole. An email exchange I had with one of my colleagues illustrates how I have held 'leaky margins' in my work with Global Generation. Like me, my colleague Vero had spent time in Palestine and our email exchange grew out of a curiosity she had that I was willing to host a visit from an Israeli Architects' association in the Skip Garden. She wanted to know the context and spirit in which I was hosting them.

Dear Vero

Thanks for voicing your concerns. I have thought long and hard about issues of this nature and in many ways it is the spine of my doctoral thesis. I am open to having the Israeli group in the garden and sharing our approach with them. I am not saying it is necessarily the 'right' approach but it is where I find energy and a need to at least try and create change through engagement and looking beyond initial binaries of us and them.

There is a history behind Global Generation which explains this. We grew out of Rise Phoenix, an arts organisation that ran projects in the Balkans after the civil wars. We worked with Kosovans, Croatians and Serbians. The fire behind the work was the impulse to find a ground beyond difference, and from that place to build trust so new understanding could grow. I have seen this happen between young people and developers / construction companies. Often my response is an instinctive thing, it is not based on a set of rules about who we should be involved with or not. Time also reveals boundaries that are not evident at first. I am open to putting them down if need be but in this instance I feel I / we can offer more to the whole situation by being open to

¹⁴

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yqo1qc-TLY>

dialogue within difference. It comes back to our name Global Generation ... A perspective without separation.

In the summer of 2014, Global Generation hosted Mary Evelyn and her husband John, who is co-producer of Journey of the Universe film and co-director of the Ecology and Religion forum at Yale University. Both life-long scholars and activists ¹⁵, they spoke of the need for different and artful ways of knowing. I was curious that they were unfamiliar with practice-based doctorates, action research processes or autoethnography. I feel these emerging disciplines offer a personal and practical approach to the scholarship inspired by the Teilhard-Berry legacy, which will help illuminate why a living cosmology is a more functional cosmology. Working in an autoethnographical way led me to look at the potentials and pitfalls that arose for me in situating leadership in an evolving story of the universe. Much of the Universe Story scholarship to date follows the academic norm of the authorless text. Apart from a small hint from Swimme (1996) that his first audiences thought he was under the influence of drugs, there is nothing of the day-to-day struggle these pioneering thinkers may have gone through to embody and communicate to others the understanding of a connected cosmology.

Summary

This chapter has set out the historical foundation for themes I explore more fully in later chapters; identity, separation from land, understanding and values derived from land and the wider cosmos, the controlling nature of the Arcadian dream of the New Zealand colonialist and vitalism. Looking through an evolutionary lens reveals the changing nature of all things in the universe including my own experience. I realised that everything is a provisional story designed to meet the challenges of particular circumstances. This enabled me to challenge inherited ideas whilst empathising with the actions of my forebears. I illustrate in subsequent chapters how this understanding helped me face different parts of myself which changed my understanding and the expression of leadership within Global Generation.

In the introduction to the chapter, I signalled the danger of being reductionist in laying ideas out in a broad periodisation of history. To avoid this I have localised and grounded ideas within my own experience. Hence I only claim a partial view. In exploring

¹⁵ Journey of the Universe Conversations with activists, <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/ed-series-overview/>

the mechanical view of modernism, I began from a negatively biased starting place. I learnt to appreciate the strength of modernity as I experienced in myself the drive to individuate and find my own power. I appreciated the desire to live in a certain and solvable universe and the need for release from the perceived hold of magical forces and malign spirits. I also learnt to appreciate the spaces in which I was confused and not so sure. I spoke with Rod about this and he related it to the leadership challenge we have in our work together. He made a point that would become increasingly relevant for me as the study developed.

In order to have a really good dialogue, you let go of your own ideas and something new emerges... You might be brilliant at all the ideas but do you have the ability to let go of all that, this is what we have always said about our work with The Universe Story... you have to hold it lightly, you can't hold it in a religious way, imposing fixed beliefs onto other people – August 28th, 2014.

During her stay with us, Mary Evelyn put it this way: "We need to evoke a deeper way of knowing about interconnection, without preaching" – July 28th, 2014.

Chapter 5 – Fault Lines

“I wish I knew how to get people to do what they are meant to do without having to push them all the time,” said Amir, a former Global Generation participant who has set up his own cycle repair company. “I think I am too soft. Maybe I need to toughen up a little bit, but I want them to feel like it is their thing.”

“It’s slow work but worth taking the time to grow a shared sense of purpose,” I reply.

Surfacing Colonialism

I happened to be working on this chapter when 19-year-old Amir called by and in many ways his predicament echoed what the chapter is about; how to grow a shared sense of purpose. As described previously, from the outset I wanted to grow an organisation that collaborated like an ecosystem. Raelin writes of a ‘leaderful’ organisation; one that relies not on one leader but one where “everyone shares the experience of being a leader, not sequentially, but concurrently and collectively” (Raelin 2003, p.xi). To me the expression ‘leaderful’ implies shared purpose. However was this possible when from the outset I had a strong sense of what that purpose should be?

In the last chapter I discussed the shifting of worldviews that have shaped the interpretation of the Universe Story by Thomas Berry and those inspired by him. In chapter three I described a dialogue that emerged within a group as experiencing a fire between people and I recognised that as fertile ground for growing collaborative leadership. The experience led Rod and I to introduce bi-weekly ‘engaged philosophy’ sessions, which we have consistently held with a core group of my Global Generation colleagues since autumn 2012. The incident I focus on in this chapter exposes how, despite my best intentions, I had fixed notions of how things should be done. I felt that I as the ‘leader’ had an obligation to insist on things being done my way.

Holding the question of how to come together with a shared sense of purpose meant that I noticed when my behaviour with colleagues was rigid and overly domineering. This opened an unexpected doorway into the back story of colonialism. Paying attention to my experience during a visit to New Zealand meant I became aware of the shadow of colonialism in me. Exploring my family history helped me see the ways in which historical currents such as superiority and control were influencing my approach to leadership. The

inquiry was made possible through dialogues I had with my sister Liz, where we discussed our family and aspects of Māori culture. I also describe how inquiring into colonisation and contrasting it with dynamics in the Universe Story enabled me to embrace diversity and a more collaborative way of being with my colleagues. This helped us enter into dialogue and cultivate a shared sense of purpose in our engaged philosophy sessions.

In terms of a contribution to shifting the underpinning narrative of leadership, my experience of colonialism is a foil which highlights potentials and pitfalls of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe.

Sharing Ownership

After our 2012 Big Bang Summer School my colleagues were curious about the ideas behind the way we had worked with an evolving story of the universe. What was this approach that had enlivened the atmosphere in the skip garden? They wanted to know more. I had often wondered how I could enable others to share ownership for the work if they had walked a different path to me. Again I asked this question. In response, Rod and I decided to instigate fortnightly sessions which we referred to as engaged philosophy. The intention was to create a forum for generating dialogue and enabling all of us to find out for ourselves what was important in our work together. These hour-and-a-half sessions have been attended on a voluntary basis, during work hours, by our education team and representatives from the kitchen and garden teams. Each session typically involves a short meditation, which is a way of enabling all of us to drop the busyness of the day and open a different space between us. Often we will have done some journaling in advance of the session, which we read to each other, and then one of us might share a reading or our ideas about a specific topic. With the intention of encouraging dialogue between us, we finish with what we refer to as a 'thread discussion'. These are some topics we have explored over the last three years.

- Can one be one-pointed and open-minded at the same time?
- The Meditation challenge
- Purpose and Values
- Action Research
- The Three Baskets of Knowledge
- What does it mean to be awake?
- What is ego?
- What does it take to collaborate?
- Story and myth
- Viewing our life within the framework of the universe?
- Thinkers and activists with a cosmological view

- Active Hope
- The art and practice of storytelling
- How do we best respond to the migrant crisis?
- What is a worldview?

In terms of an action research process the sessions have provided an opportunity for regular first person inquiry through journaling and second-person inquiry through dialogue. We have held the intention of carrying opinions lightly in order to surface, follow and build on shared threads of discussion, rather than debating separate viewpoints. At different times we have also complemented engaged philosophy with lunch time meditation sessions. My colleague, Silvia describes her motivation for participating:

We have to really go into these ideas ourselves otherwise it won't be authentic – we will just be copying - Silvia Pedretti.

A Difficult Conversation

“Have you got a minute?” I heard myself say to one of our young interns, who I will call Walter. The frosty morning was showing a rare glimpse of sun and everything seemed to be shining. The conversation was unplanned ... the moment felt right, to me at least, and I took my opportunity. “It might be good if someone else can do the lunchtime garden tour for the visitors today, so you can come to the meditation session. I think a next step for you is to go beyond what you already know. You are very bright and pick things up fast, which is great, and there’s more. For example, I’ve noticed that you find it difficult in engaged philosophy.” “Yes, that’s right” Walter said, “I struggle with it.” “It makes sense; it’s not always easy for any of us,” I responded, “but there is a real potential if we can learn to inquire together with others and through doing that step into new territory. That is why the focus is on listening and building on what others have said, rather than just bringing our already pre-formed conclusions.”

“The thing is,” said Walter, a 23-year-old Masters graduate, “I am lucky enough to feel that I don’t need to develop. I am happy with how I am.”

This was getting challenging. “There is a vibrancy that comes when we stretch ourselves; like plants growing we become more alive” I said.

“I don’t think I will develop by exploring philosophy; I need to be given responsibility and chances to go out and do things on my own,” replied Walter.

At this point I tried to make our discussion less personal. “There can be limitations for an organisation if everybody just goes around doing their own thing – we could all too easily become a group of separate individuals bumping into each other.”

In hindsight I could see that I was saying and implying a lot to Walter. Reflecting on Nicole’s comment to me, I would say this is an example of where I was not ‘being strict’ in a good way. I hadn’t really listened to why Walter was uncomfortable or respected what he might need in that moment.

Several hours later, Paul, our Gardens Manager, came to me distressed. “I have an unhappy guy working with me today. Walter said you told him he wasn’t alive in his communication. He doesn’t like the engaged philosophy sessions. Is there a way he can step out of them with dignity? He is scared because he wants to go for the job Global Generation is advertising and he doesn’t want to ruin his chances.”

I needed to think about this and discuss it with others in the team; it touched on aspects of the work that I had struggled to define over many years. I was not willing to let it go and I realized that I needed to be more careful and less impulsive in the way I spoke to Walter. I had been harbouring the thought that in time Walter would grow into a leadership role in Global Generation, which carried expectations on my part. I wanted to know what our education team, Rachel and Silvia, had to say about the situation.

“Do you think it is important for people involved in the educational side of Global Generation’s work to come to engaged philosophy?” I asked.

“Absolutely,” they both responded in one voice, stating that it is where we can really inquire into what we are doing. That they were more adamant than me was encouraging and also surprising. It highlighted to me, how in parallel with an inner sense of determination about how things should be done, I have been tentative about verbalising this.

Afterwards, I wondered if I gave enough room for Paul to express his concerns rather than plying him with others’ reinforcement of my actions. One of the things Walter had said to Paul was that he did not like the fact that he didn’t feel he could disagree. I explained to Paul that in engaged philosophy we are exploring particular communication practices, like following a thread, that we are introducing to the young people involved with us. In school, they learn to debate and disagree, but, in my experience, they do not always learn to really listen. Paul has not taken part in engaged philosophy and so I suggested that he and Walter speak to Silvia and others, as I was too invested in the idea that as many of the Global Generation team as possible should participate.

Walter's comment "I don't like the fact that I can't disagree" stayed with me – was there truth to what he was saying? Would it help the process of growing a shared sense of purpose if I made more room inside myself for disagreement? Did I run the risk of surrounding myself with people who simply agreed with me? I thought of Mary Evelyn Tucker's description of how evolutionary cosmology re-orient us from the fixed idea of "other-worldly perfection and goodness" to a quest toward "participation in the dynamic evolutionary process" (1985, p.10). In this light, diversity and dealing in difference is the stuff of the Universe Story! I felt a gap between my aspirations and what was actually happening on the ground. I noticed that I wanted to stay with my discomfort and keep these questions open; I wondered where they would take me if I could let go of any defensiveness.

Between the interaction I had with Walter, described above, and the next engaged philosophy session, I spent three weeks in New Zealand. During that time I began unearthing a fault line which made me particularly aware of the tendency in my family to advocate one's own plan and listen poorly, be it to the land or to people.

Tūrangawaewae

In discussing what gives leaders "the sense of agency, the resources, the awareness, the approach and the crafts of practice to take action of some kind in the service of a more socially and environmentally sustainable and socially just world," Marshall et al. write, "sufficiently robust change means questioning the ground we stand on" (2011, p.6). I often tell the young people I work with that it is important to stand in one's own shoes. Ranginui Walker describes Tūrangawaewae as "the standing and identity of a people" (1990, p.70). What did Tūrangawaewae mean for me? How might finding my Tūrangawaewae provide ground from which to make different choices than those that informed by colonial conditioning?

My sister Liz and I spoke of Tūrangawaewae as we returned from an early morning walk to the river and across the land where I spent my teenage years. Tūrangawaewae is the ground on which one feels empowered and connected. As we talked, we watched the sunrise outline the sharp upward reaching shapes of the Tararua ranges in the distance. Our conversation went deeper when my sister said, "rather than exploring the source of your inspiration, it's about actually seeing where you stand right now. Tūrangawaewae for Māori is the place where they know who they are. This includes your family grouping and the land. You, Jane, know where you come from, but where do you stand now?"



Figure 9: Ruamahanga River

I sensed this was pointing to ground from which change could grow. For me this has meant looking more closely at the conflicting feelings of loyalty, needing to get away and grief that I have experienced in relation to New Zealand. I needed to know “the soil from which I sprang and the past that explains, at least in part, the emotions of the present” (Dempsey as quoted by King 1985, p.125)

Much of the critique of colonialism has come from those who have been colonised. I explore colonialism as a descendant of colonisers. To give you, the reader, an understanding of this lens I will give you some background about my family and the form of colonialism that occurred in New Zealand. Some of my ancestors arrived in New Zealand in 1840. They did not own land in England. Possibly because of the harshness of the enclosures and the industrial revolution, their hopes for a better life lay in the promise of New Zealand as a Garden of Eden (Beattie 2014; Fairburn 1989; Park 1995; Westmacott 1977), where they, like others of similar circumstance, could become landowners. The early settlers arrived to find a people, New Zealand Māori, who were steeped in a mythological way of thinking, in which land and people were not separate. In using mythological here, I mean working with metaphorical stories that connect us to intangible forces and help us find our place and

purpose in the cosmos¹⁶. Mānuka Henare contextualises the consequence of an ontological perspective that identifies self with the natural world.

Philosophically, Māori people do not see themselves as separate from nature, humanity and the natural world, being direct descendants of Earth Mother. Thus, the resources of the earth do not belong to humankind; rather, humans belong to the earth (Henare 2001, p.202).

In the last chapter, I mentioned the prevalence of a mechanistic approach to the land amongst the early settlers; “those that arrived in New Zealand brought with them religious notions of human supremacy over nature, a fierce determination to reshape the land to make it fit for participation in new forms of global trade” (Farrell 2007, p.217). This was a recipe for owning and stripping the land bare in the service of farming, which has had generational consequences for land and people. This sentiment is reflected in the diary of my grandfather Spencer Westmacott (S.W.) who, prior to the outbreak of the First World War, worked with a team of men to ‘break in’ the bush in The King Country, one of the last areas of New Zealand to be settled by Pākehā.



Figure 10: S.W. Surveying the Results of a Burn

¹⁶ Religious studies scholar, William Doty describes how mythic narratives are “not little but big stories, touching not just the everyday, but sacred or specially marked topics that concern much more than any immediate situation” (2000, p.15).

S.W. describes the experience of his first burn, where several hundred acres were felled to make way for pasture:

"Let her go!" I called, seeing they were ready and, lighting the leaves of a prostrate tawa prayed now that after all our anxiety and my bushmen's efforts, we would be rewarded with a nice clean burn" (as cited by Westmacott ¹⁷ 1977, p.95).

S.W. slept uneasily that night, fearful the burn would not take, which would mean losing the last of the family money that had backed his endeavours. He woke to find the air thick with smoke and joined one of the men in his party who turned to him and said: "The whole bloody country is afire!" (Ibid, p.96). S.W.'s spirits rose, "The fire had caught alright. Immediately before us was a black burn. The ground covered with ash, the bigger logs and branches charred and smouldering" (Ibid).

My own childhood recollections of riding through the steep slopes of the land farmed by S.W. and his son after him are reminiscent of geographer Ken Cumberland's description, "hillsides were littered with fire-blackened logs and gaunt, dead stumps of forest giants" (1981, p.6). This description is echoed by mother who wrote about her bush childhood:

Behind the house the face of Rangitoto, ('blood red face') would glow red in the sunset. It, and the surrounding hillsides had been cleared and grassed, but the fern was struggling to take over, with wineberry, 'mother of the bush' as the first tree to regenerate, in the gullies. Everywhere stood the tall ghostly half burnt skeletons of the forest giants; rata, rimu and totara which had withstood the original burn. They were to remain a distinctive part of the landscape for many years to come (Riddiford 1993, p.4).

Mānuka Henare (2001) describes how the notion of reciprocity with the earth is central to the Māori world view that emphasises the mythico-historical origins of vital life. Mānuka points out that this worldview "was bound to clash with the settlers' Christian utilitarianism and positivism" (Henare 2001, p.206). In looking at my background I have tried to resist the binaries of good and bad because they tend to entrench one's position (Motzafi-Haller, 1997). However I wanted to understand the feeling I had of standing on divided ground within myself. What were the different worldviews at work within me?

As my sister spoke, a glimpse of an underlying fault line opened inside me and I said, "Living away for the last 20 years, I have maintained a romantic relationship to New Zealand, which posed a clash with deeper values. There have been two parallel threads running in me. The opportunist spirit of the pioneer is well and truly alive, which at times creates ambivalence about

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S.W.'s daughter in Law

giving over to deeper values of wholeness. Sometimes I don't feel fully connected as there is this division going on." My sister took the conversation further and said, "It's like an earthquake, shifting forces on shifting ground. Up until now, you have had a nice little story about where you come from, before you talk about who you are now. Whereas the sort of work you are doing with young people and the things you are grappling with in building community need to be reconciled with motivations that lie at a very deep part of your being". I thought back to the idealistic picture I had included in my doctoral inquiry proposal two years before:

I come from New Zealand and my childhood was coloured by the bush, the rivers and the sea. A land baked by a South Pacific sun is a land of intense contrasts. Deep blue sky that goes on for miles framed by sharp silhouettes of rising falling hills making shapes and telling stories in the distance.

The truth of what was being said landed. "Yes," I replied, "I need to find out where the rifts that are within me come from; what are the deeper seismic shifts?" My sister agreed and said in a quiet voice, "It is something that Pākehā struggle to do... we are talking about fault lines."

Can Do

The reality for early settlers was harsh. Rather than arriving in the Arcadian paradise that their passage had been sold on, new arrivals found what many considered to be wasteland.

... instead of the 'breadfruit tree', instead of 'Elysian fields and groves adorned with every beauty of Nature' a complaining shipload arriving at Nelson saw merely the flax tree in a swampy piece of ground (Park 1995, p.324).

After an eight-month sea journey, returning to England was not an option for most. The settlers boxed on, buoyed up by the mythology that New Zealand, once tamed, could become the land of a utopian dream. They developed a particular kind of strength in the face of adversity, which my mother calls 'having backbone.' I don't think one can underestimate the fact that the relationship between settlers and the land was necessarily based on survival and, for some, a desire to create the lives they yearned for but could never achieve in the country they had left behind. It has now changed but as a child I often heard England being spoken of as home.

Almost none of the pioneers regarded themselves as anything but expatriates and even in their deep isolation from each other and from the rest of the world, they turned their backs on the landscape – showing no guilt for the charred skeleton they had made of most of it, and no love for the little that had managed to preserve its pristine glory – and pined for the Old Country (McLauchlan 2012, p.170).

For many years I avoided my background: politician father and farming family who were directors of the capital's newspaper, makers, defenders (and breakers) of laws. On both sides of the family huge tracts of land were procured, of which little has been retained in the ownership of the family. I now return to New Zealand and I experience changes in myself and others. Amongst some I have spoken to, including my siblings, there is recognition that new values are needed, a different relationship to both land and people:

Now we need to adapt to more interdependence, more of the team approach to solving problems in an intellectual sort of way. A nuclear power station is not a hole in the fence (McLauchlan 2012, p.177).

I noticed, while in New Zealand, shifts in this fiercely 'can-do' nation. I was raised in a practical, down-to-earth creed and it still informs me today. In general, being a 'doer' was valued over being a thinker (Fairburn 1989). My mother, well into her 80s, was as adept at trapping a possum as making a pavlova. This constitution is perhaps best encapsulated by McLauchlan, who writes:

Very few New Zealand pioneers came from the aristocracy and the measure of a New Zealand man in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century was understandably what he could do in practical terms for himself. If an intellectual couldn't build a better mousetrap, shearing shed or fence, grow better grass or fix a sick cow, he was useless as far as the rest of the community was concerned (McLauchlan 2012, p.177).

Compared to when I was growing up, it seems there is now more room in the practical for the philosophical, or is it simply that there is more room in me? There is a loosening of the ruthless pushing forward of the pioneer; a morphing towards a more collaborative way of being. I have always been wedded to the idea of the pioneer spirit. Forging ahead and breaking in new ground was an unquestioned reason to be. I was proud of my ancestors who travelled for months to establish a life they deemed as good, acquiring land and building the clan. I knew mistakes had been made, but in my mind courage seemed to cancel out all calamity. Engendering a pioneering spirit has been at the heart of so much I have done in London. I wanted young people to believe they could make new things happen. Whilst I was in New Zealand I became curious about shifts in what I valued. In a conversation with a school leader, I found myself habitually reaching for the word *pioneer*; I noticed that I did not want to grasp it; the glamour had gone. I felt the raw bullishness, the taking that could strip the land bare, generation after generation. I was curious to see who I was beyond this side of me. I became interested in other words in my lexicon, the juxtaposition between pioneering and development. Changing on the outside or growing on the inside, control or curate?

Land

Land acts as a mirror for the forces that drive me. In terms of setting up an organization, I have drawn on the 'can-do, go out and get it' approach of the pioneer, but now this was in question. I was beginning to feel the pathology in the pioneer that has created generational consequences for land and people. Human ecologist Alistair McIntosh writes: "The proper use of land poses not a technical nor an economic, but primarily a metaphysical problem" (2008, p.81). In 1940 Monte Holcroft forecast that until we found reconciliation with the forest, "New Zealanders would remain cut off from any real depth of spiritual life" (as quoted by Park 1995, p.310). Like many people, I often experience numbness in relationship to the environmental crisis of the planet. Standing in raw discomfort does not come easily. Thinking about the shadow of colonialism in relation to the present seemed to invite a situation which penetrated this numbness.

It took me several days to digest what I had seen; before me, grey skeletons stretched across a hundred acres of steep hillside. "What is it with the trees?" I ask. The kanuka ¹⁸ had been poisoned by helicopter so they could be replaced with *new* trees. The land owner, commented, "I have always wanted to have my own forest." The remains of the native bush would make a windbreak for 80,000 non-native trees. Lured by the economics of a government grant, the land owner, a relative, had gone all out – a grant justified on the premise of environmental sustainability. The thinking is that as new trees grow they will capture and store carbon. This enables governments the world over to play the global game of carbon credits, a means of checking boxes to ostensibly enable people to continue life as usual.

It takes a certain kind of determination to implant one's own schemes against the forces of nature. I acknowledge that in the face of climate change there are no easy answers. However, the practice of taming land, rather than listening to land and what lies beneath land, seems to require a denial of much of one's experience.

When I am in New Zealand, I often complete a morning meditation ritual with a swim in the Ruamahanga river. I run through the wet grass following the patterns in the ground. The previous year on a trip to New Zealand, I had bought a small locket and filled it with soil from the edge of the river. It was a reminder of where I come from. Over the 12 months between visits, the soil had washed out and the locket was empty. I intended to fill it again. At the end of my visit, wheeling a luggage trolley through the native bush planting between the domestic and international terminals at Auckland airport, drinking in a last look at the intense blue sky, a

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Kunzea ericoides

moment of panic filled my mind; I had lost my ground. I felt my locket and realized I had left it empty. The airport soil was no substitute for the Ruamahanga soil. As I contemplated what the locket might now mean to me, I felt myself fall into a different ground, an empty ground. I decided to leave the locket empty as a reminder that a way forward from the intense emotions I had experienced in relationship to my history, would grow through listening from an empty space of not knowing inside myself. It is a space that existed before history, before anything ever happened. During the flight back to London I wrote feverishly. By the time I reached London I had written a paper called Fault Lines. I emailed it to my sister Liz and 24 hours later I received a response from her.

I'm overjoyed at how well this encapsulates the seeds and thread of your enquiry while in NZ. There are many people who come to mind that I would like you to share this with including Gordon McLauchlan. Very powerful stuff ... I'm sure there is a Maori proverb that can assist here but in the meantime kia kaha¹⁹ will do. – Liz Riddiford, by email, April 4th, 2013.

Values

Rosemary Anderson describes how in Intuitive Inquiry “explorations along the fault lines of the personality tend to invite change and transform openings” (Anderson, 2006, p.9). Considering the fault lines that run within me provided a pause, particularly in regard to my contribution in the next engaged philosophy session, which had been designed by Rod. It was arranged for my first day back at Global Generation. The session was to be an exploration of our individual values and those of Global Generation and where they might meet. After the interaction some weeks before, I was concerned how it would be between Walter and me and so at the start of the session, I reminded everyone, (but mostly myself) of guidelines for encouraging dialogue; listen deeply and stretch ourselves beyond what we already know, to give room for new understanding to emerge between us.

As the light faded, we sat together in the Skip Garden. We meditated for ten minutes and then divided in to small groups of three before the nine of us sat in one circle. At first, the conversation was awkward and then a spark took hold and I felt the thrill of ideas seemingly rising up by themselves. Walter was saying something that took our attention, especially because it came from him. “As an organisation,” he said, “we value keeping an inquiry alive about what we are doing.”

¹⁹ My sister’s comment came just two years after the Christchurch earthquakes when Kia Kaha (Be Strong!) was widely used by Māori and non-Māori (Barrer 2012).

“Yes exactly,” said Rod, “It’s not about coming from fixed ideas about what we are doing, but rather being open to what is happening and then being ready to respond.”

Susie, our Head Chef chimed in, “This is how the evolutionary process works in values.” Everyone was leaning in and engaged. I felt myself relax into a momentum that went beyond any one individual.

Manpreet, our Office Manager, was next to speak, “The inquiry is sustained because it’s inclusive. I have a visual sense of it – it’s like bamboo sticks bending in the wind. Questioning things makes us a lot stronger.” I was glad I had remembered to turn on my recorder and mentally reminded myself to give room for others to speak.

Silvia said, “Jane, you and Rod have names for what we are doing which is The Universe Story and evolutionary philosophy. I cannot call myself a follower of this philosophy, but it is important that we have this moment. The important thing is what really happens, no matter what it is called, and then we can come from different influences.”

It was a relief to be invited to let go of fixed ideas and I responded, “The main thing is that we have moments of meaningful engagement where something comes alive in the space between us and then it doesn’t really matter what we call it. I know what has helped me but I can’t expect other people to do the same things that I have done.”

Walter spoke excitedly, “I think it is interesting that at this part of the session we were meant to talk about Global Generation’s values and no one has actually named them. We all might hold different values and come from different places, but the fact that an exploration is happening is the important thing, rather than having a list of values.”

Rod agreed, “The important thing is the space for deep listening and no philosophy or religion can brand that space as theirs. And I think it makes an organisation strong, if you can have this space as important.”

Manpreet followed, “The space is natural and organic; it gives people the freedom to make their choices in their own time.”

I was excited by what was being said, and I thought it’s not that simple. I took a step back, which enabled Silvia to find the words for the delicate ground I was grappling with in my mind. “It’s not totally random though; we do know if a path is not the right one.”

Rod then voiced the ongoing question I had been carrying about leadership, “Can we be strong in a certain value but spacious and open at the same time?”

Identifying the colonialist drive to control land and people in my cultural back story helped me resist the compulsion I have experienced to control what my colleagues might say. In this case it would have been with fixed and much-cherished ideas about what I thought Global Generation's core values were.

Linking practice to Literature

I have compared dynamics within my current leadership practice to the forces Berry Swimme and Tucker attribute to the evolving story of the Universe. As a counterpoint I have also compared my experience to dynamics described in literature, family memoirs and photographs, about the impact on New Zealand of the colonialist venture. I looked retrospectively at selected events, noticed and wrote analytical stories about my responses to them. A process which aligns with Mitch Allen's description of what autoethnographers do to bring validity and cultural significance to their writing (Allen, cited in Ellis et al. 2011).

Smith Sullivan (2008) describes how emotional or physical pain is a driving force behind autoethnography. Because I don't write about physical trauma such as cancer, rape or miscarriage, at times I wondered if I was writing a true autoethnography. However, as time went by I realised I was writing about a cultural disease, which could be thought of as 'post-colonial disorder'. I have used the process of writing stories to try to understand the separation between land and people within my family, which has been a form of therapy. As described in the last chapter, this split represents the fracturing of identity from the earlier sense of self and mind, derived from a meaningful relationship to land and the wider cosmos. I have described the effects of this historical separation as it shows up in me. Doing so is a way of applying autoethnographic research that includes and goes beyond the personal.

I reviewed our discussion on values through the lens of William Isaac's description of Dialogic Leadership (1999) and Joseph Raelin's (2003) accounts of leaderful organisations. Drawing on Bohm, Isaacs writes of suspension:

This means we neither suppress what we think nor advocate it with unilateral conviction ... We simply acknowledge and observe our thoughts and feelings as they arise without being compelled to act on them. This can release a tremendous amount of creative energy (1999, p.134).

David Bohm describes:

No fixed position is so important that it is worth holding at the expense of destroying the dialogue itself... What is essential is that each participant is as it were

suspending his or her point of view while also holding other points of view in a suspended form and giving full attention to what they mean.... The mind is then able to respond to creative new perceptions going beyond the particular points of view that have been suspended (Nichols 2003 citing Bohm, pp.295 – 296).

By each of us suspending ideas in our engaged philosophy session we managed to think together and find a shared sense of purpose, particularly in terms of a mutual understanding that Global Generation's primary value, at least at that point in time, was inquiry. Isaacs (1999) writes of the importance of welcoming opposing views, actively making room for difference and opposition. In contrast to Isaacs, my experience has been that the core qualities for dialogue do not develop concurrently. To constructively oppose, I needed to first learn to really listen, both to others and to a more subtle dimension which one could think of as our rootedness within the cosmos. Like Isaacs I have also found that the practice of sitting still has helped me suspend fixed ideas and let go into deeper, more unknown, cosmic ground from where I could listen deeply.

Both Isaacs (1999) and Raelin (2003) write about the need for inner work to create awareness of one's own conditioned behaviour. Such awareness is required to create the conditions for successful collaboration. Raelin (2003, p.62) expands on the notion of 360-degree feedback, that is, performance feedback from a range of colleagues and stakeholders, by advocating 720-degree feedback. By this he means feedback gained from working therapeutically to unearth destructive patterns that may stem from childhood. While this is helpful, I feel we need to look beyond our personal lives into the historical and more deeply embedded sedimentation of worldviews that have shaped our lives. For example, I needed to understand colonialist forces that went beyond my own childhood.

I found Raelin's analysis to lack a compelling overarching story that might provide the metaphorical ground to support the collaborative principles he lays out. Isaacs, on the other hand, draws on the cosmic and ecological dimensions of who we are and what we are a part of as the basis for dialogue. He describes how we might explore different ways of knowing that can connect us to a sense of wholeness and coherence, such as listening to an astronaut describing a boundaryless view of the earth from space, or developing a practice of presence and awareness in nature.

Considering the diversity within the story of the universe encouraged me to embrace the energy of our differences. Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme write extensively about the role of diversity in a universe which has created the elementary particles, complex galaxies and radiant structures of the animate world.

The universe arises into being as spontaneities governed by the primordial ordering of diversity, self-manifestation and mutuality ... were there no differentiation the universe would collapse into a homogenous smudge (Swimme and Berry 1992, p.72).

The huge time scale of the unfolding patterns of our deep time past gave me faith and patience in the discomfort of difference. For example, considering the urge to come together that expressed itself in the earliest oceanic cells and before that, the movement over eons of dust into rocks, made me appreciate that to really listen, to really grow and think together is slow and not always smooth:

Amid the complexity and immobility of the rocks there rise suddenly toward me "gusts of being", sudden and brief fits of awareness of the laborious unification of things, and it is no longer myself thinking, but the Earth acting (Teilhard de Chardin 1968, p.73).

Summary

Making room for diversity and holding purpose continued to be a live issue for my colleagues and me. After reading this account, more than a year after our discussion, Silvia raised important questions:

Walter ... what a strong memory and what an important moment for me. The episode is still alive in many ways, in different shapes. I wonder how much we can spread our values without preaching. How much are we ready to accept diversity at GG? Is there really a space for everyone's ideas? Are we really working with the whole community? Is the whole GG team asking questions about their role, what are the potential boundaries? – Silvia Pedretti, November 26th, 2014.

Situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe stretched me beyond the notions of leaderful control that I had been raised with into a deeper quality of listening to both land and people. This brought tensions to the surface and helped me hold them in suspension. For example, holding the aspiration that Global Generation might work as an ecosystem with a shared sense of purpose heightened my awareness of rifts that ran between us. Rather than minimising Walter, I thought about the role of diversity within our deep time past and also made room for my own sense of discomfort in the face of disagreement. This brought up what would prove to be a pivotal thread of inquiry; what is the shadow of colonialism on leadership? My empty locket was a reminder of the empty

ground of potential that lies beneath the pain and fracture we have imposed on land. In letting go and emptiness, I came together with my colleagues in dialogue.

It is easy to assume autoethnography is an individual affair; however, as I wrote earlier, I maintain that real autoethnography is relational. I was curious what others who were also the progeny of colonisers had to say about the Pākehā experience described in this chapter. A year later a friend of mine and fellow doctoral candidate, Jo Bailey, who is the General Manager for the Waikato Institute for Leisure and Sport and a Pākehā, responded to the way I had introduced the notion of Tūrangawaewae. Jo, who is the descendant of whalers, said my story had opened a doorway for her in helping the young people she works with, who are mostly Pākehā, find the Māoriness (as she put it) inside themselves, particularly in terms of finding a meaningful relationship with the land. Drawing in an earlier thread, Jo also helped me understand more about the relevance of beginning my autoethnographic journey in Palestine, which I describe in chapter 1.

We are walking through Zealandia, the relatively new inner city native bird sanctuary in Wellington. I had just photographed a breeding pair of the once nearly extinct takahe. We could hear the sound of kākā, the bush parrots, overhead. As the path wound around the former water reservoir, Jo suddenly stopped and looked at me. She started speaking about her trip to Palestine some years ago. At first I was confused; it seemed a leap in our conversation. Then I started to listen, I mean really listen, as the significance of her words landed within me. “The thing is” said Jo, “The Palestinian story is also our story, colonisation of land already inhabited by people who had a different relationship to the land, echoes aspects of New Zealand’s heritage and that is a story that is within many of us.”

Until the trip New Zealand described in this chapter, I had not thought about the impact of colonialism on me. I didn’t know how to think about it. Writing the stories in this chapter was therapeutic. I became more conscious of the dominant qualities of a machine story which fuelled colonialism; qualities such as already knowing and controlling which led to the imposition of uniformity on land and people. In contrast Berry, Swimme and Tucker point to values of the universe such as diversity and the spontaneity that arise from not already knowing. After this cycle of inquiry I noticed that I still carried a sense of purpose about what I wanted to happen between us and those we engage with at Global Generation, but I carried it more lightly and with more curiosity. I tried to carry it in the way I imagined early peoples walked lightly on the land ... listening for signs and patterns that revealed their place within the universe.

Chapter 6 – Indigeneity

Rod stood in the middle of a field gently guiding a group of 8 and 9 year olds: “I would like you to stand up very slowly without making a sound ... now you are going to walk in the way that ancient peoples walked. They needed to walk this way when they hunted animals; if the animal heard the sound of a broken twig or a leaf rustling they would run away. If we walk this way nature might say something to us. As you walk I want you to use all of your senses, feel the ground under your feet, the wind on your face... the sound of the birds... notice the different grasses and the creatures that live amongst them.” In silence the group spread out; each one finding their own ground. “Now cut your pace in half, go as slow as you can go,” said Rod.

Coming together again to share their experience, it seemed the world had opened itself to us a little more that day. “I tasted the air” ... “I saw two dragon flies” ... “I noticed the swallows gliding” ... “the grass was as soft as a sofa” ... “the ants moved like lightning” ... “I felt that I was a hover fly” ... “everything works together and has its own special job,” said the children.

Expanding Identity

The question; “What does the land have to say to me?” would have been dismissed as superstitious and animistic by my forebears. This, as Berry (1988) pointed out, is the autism of our time. Unearthing the fault lines of a colonial heritage as described in the last chapter and sharing my reflections with others opened opportunities for exploring different ways of knowing that shifted my sense of identity. Re-framing my identity made it more natural to situate leadership within an evolving story of the universe. This chapter describes how, thanks to a suggestion from my sister Liz, I came across the Three Baskets of Knowledge. This is a traditional Māori story that called me to look at the rifts caused by colonialism that have coloured my life. Carolyn Ellis (1997, 2004) claims that emotional recall is a valid means of producing data in an autoethnographic process. Barbara Turner-Vesselago (2012) describes how memories more than ten years old that surface through the process of free fall writing are often rich ground to explore. She calls this composting. Working with the Three Baskets brought back memories from more than 20 years ago; memories about the beginning of my spiritual search and the pain I sometimes felt in establishing an inner city native forest in Auckland, New Zealand.

In this chapter I also ask, on what grounds could I consider myself Indigenous? What did it really mean to connect to the story of the universe as my story? The Three

Baskets of Knowledge was a way into answering this. They demanded understanding of the whole of who I am. This included a deeper sense of self, which connected me to everything around me and everything that has ever happened. In that sense this chapter is also about a process of decolonisation; a closing of the Western historical divide between self and nature. Looking beneath the relatively recent fractures of the colonial story to an ancient and emerging story of the universe reveals an identity which I began to think of as being indigenous to the cosmos. Being able to stand comfortably in this identity was supported by Chellie Spiller, a Māori Scholar, who mentored me. I encountered aspects of Māoritanga (culture) through exploring the Three Baskets of Knowledge.

The personal inquiry catalysed by the Three Baskets led to a second question: how could I enable others to connect to the Universe Story as their own story? Storytelling became a medium for me to do this. I describe my first steps in becoming a storyteller and how I used the telling of the three Baskets of Knowledge as an invitation for a group of young people to find their place in the land.

The Three Baskets of Knowledge

The story of Tāne's Three Baskets speaks directly to what Global Generation tries to awaken in young people; that is, a more connected, less fixed sense of self. Although I have come across different interpretations of the Three Baskets of Knowledge, the common thread is that:

Tāne, the god of the forest, is asked by Io, the Supreme Being, to journey through the twelve heavens to retrieve the knowledge that will guide human existence on earth. The knowledge he received came in the form of three kete mātauranga – baskets of knowledge – along with two stones for assimilation of knowledge to ensure that what is selected from the baskets is used wisely and not simply for personal gain, but for all (Spiller 2011, p.127).

I have re-worked the following 'mythic story' based on a play written by James Barnes (2004, pp.170-176) along with an interpretation of the Three Baskets from Rev. Māori Marsden (2003).

Tāne crossed a silver bridge made from billowy vapour. As the vapour cleared Tāne saw in front of him a beautiful woman. She looked up at Tāne and her eyes shone like greenstone in the sunlight. Tāne thought she must be a messenger from Io and so knelt before her and spoke, "I have come to receive the three baskets of the sacred knowledge. Can you tell me where I can find them?"

The woman looked at Tāne and her words penetrated deep inside him. “I will show you the Three Baskets, but you must promise to always carry them so that humans will walk well on the face of the earth.” And Tāne agreed that he and all of his children and his children’s children would be the guardians of the knowledge. “Look into my eyes - what do you see?” said the woman. Tāne looked into her dark shiny eyes. He was shocked; he saw himself staring back at him, all of his hopes, his fears, his attributes, his challenges, and he described this. “That,” said the woman, “is the first basket, knowledge of oneself as one truly is.”

“Look again” said the woman. This time Tāne saw the woman and he saw the reflection of the sky, the rocks, the plants, the birds and the trees, and he said, “I see you and all that has passed in all that is present in the physical world around me.” “That is the second basket of knowledge”, said the woman, “Knowledge and respect of everything around us.”

“Now I will show you the third basket and this is the most important one. In the future if people forget this they will lose their way.” Tāne looked again and this time, he saw the woman, the plants, the animals, the sky, the sea and he saw himself. He described how he saw everything as one thing. The woman smiled and said, “To see one’s own reflection as the interconnection upon which the universe is built – this is the third basket, Kete Tūātea.”

Global Generation has been framing experience as ‘I, We and the Planet’ (c.f. Wilber 1996) for some years. This created the fertile ground on which the Three Baskets of Knowledge landed. ‘I, We and The Planet’ came alive as the sacredness of Tāne’s journey slowed me down and invited different ways of knowing. Following the recommendation of Marsden that Māoritanga can only be understood “through a passionate, inward, subjective approach” (2003, p.23), I felt called to unmask myself. It was a call to further understand the forces that drive me.

The First Basket of Knowledge: Kete Tūāuri

J.R. Journal – 1983

Come to the sea

Come to where the tide rides and you can ride to
The waters today move gently and so must we
Listen to the morepork²⁰ calling
Listen to the morepork calling
Calling on the place within where the caterpillar of truth lies
Waiting forever waiting, metamorphically straining
Revelation the prize of the path being clear

The First Basket of Knowledge speaks to the spiritual calling that has been burning within me for most of my life. It is what stirred as a child when I lay in bed and heard the sound of the morepork calling. By my teenage years, I had begun to recognize in myself a current that ran deeper than who I thought I was supposed to be. I wrote the poem above when I was 20, not long before I went on my first meditation retreat. Over the next 30 years the poem would return to me at significant moments. Now, whenever I hear the morepork, I am reminded of the spiritual ground I stand on. To acknowledge, let alone to prioritise spirit runs against the dominant myth in Western culture. As Helena Kettleborough describes:

We have a story but it's very one-sided: you go to school, you get a job, you work and you buy stuff. Then you die. The trouble with this story is that it's not satisfying. There's no oomph in it. It's not the whole story either; there's more (2013, p.149).

The Second Basket of Knowledge: Kete Aronui

Everything we can see, hear, taste and touch is held in the Second Basket of Knowledge: "This is the natural world around us apprehended by the senses" (Marsden, 2003, p.61). Feelings about the carnage of the kanuka forest described in the last chapter lingered. This story connected me to other stories that have shaped who I am.

Studying horticulture in the early 1990s, I learnt about the ecological story of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) in New Zealand. When the European settlers arrived, they introduced animals to hunt and stripped the hillsides bare in their efforts to feed themselves and recreate the familiar. They planted grass for sheep and cattle to graze and yellow flowering gorse for hedges. Without the berries of the native plants to feed on and at the mercy of stoats and other imported predators, the native birds were silenced. The settlers had unknowingly "switched off each district's dawn

²⁰

Morepork is the New Zealand English word for ruru, the New Zealand Owl.

chorus”²¹. The soil on the naked hillsides began to slide. Erosion marked the face of the jagged hills that rise up out of the river valleys into the sky.

As a child, my memory is of long car journeys looking up at hillsides covered in the bright yellow flowers of the shrubby, prickly, hardy gorse. It was known across the country as a noxious weed. In time, thriving in its new home, gorse began to play a restorative role, as the coloniser of open ground. Some farmers still tried to graze the hillsides. They would annually burn the gorse which encouraged the seed pods of the gorse to crack open and germinate. Eventually the fires stopped and the gorse was left to grow.

As a legume the nodules on the roots of the gorse captured atmospheric nitrogen and the soil became nutritious. Gorse also provided shelter from the wind and the harsh rays of sun. While by no means a replacement for the loss of native mānuka, (*Leptospermum scoparium*) gorse served a similar function to mānuka as the nurse crop for the climax layer of the forest which included trees like rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), totara (*Podocarpus totara*), titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*) and puriri (*Vitex lucens*). The conditions needed to be right for the forest to become established; which included leaving gorse to grow and controlling predators, so the native birds who disperse seeds could return, along with the willingness of volunteers across the country to plant large tracts of land in native plant species.²²

When I return to New Zealand, I notice the hills around Wellington, once yellow, now clothed in the dark green mantle of the native bush. It’s a tentative process but in some places the berries and the birds are returning; nature, given a chance, is bringing life back to the land (Gabites 1993; Magesan et al. 2011). I chose to tell the story of gorse, as it has provided a hopeful and restorative metaphor for much of my working life. It is a story that counterbalances some of the legends of my childhood which influenced my ideas about what leadership meant. I grew up with stories about larger-than-life characters, all men, who sought to control and conquer the land. In the course of researching this chapter I came across an 1885 receipt from the National Library. The receipt bore the name Edward Riddiford, my great-grandfather, who was also known as ‘King Riddiford’. He was one of the settlers who imported the bird-eating stoats and ferrets, which unbeknownst to him at the time, would lead to the silencing of the land (Farrell 2007, p.9). Margaret Wigley, my mother’s sister, published a book on the life of my great-great-grandfather on my mother’s side of the family, William Robinson, who was known as

²¹ Park 1995, p.310

²² Riddiford 2015, p.127

'Ready Money Robinson'. During the 1860s in the spirit of gentrification based on new found wealth, Ready Money imported from England hundreds of exotic birds and shrubs (2006, p.246). As they became established the foreign birds and plants threatened the existing native species. This was an intervention supported by the Arcadian aesthetic of re-creating pastoral scenes of England, combined with the economic drive to improve land from wasteland to a productive enterprise. My mother and others have pointed out that ethically these early settlers had no idea that there was anything wrong with what they were doing. Knowledge of the past has helped explain the unaccountable sense of grief that I have experienced whilst walking through parts of New Zealand.

The Third Basket of Knowledge: Kete Tua-tea

Look again and you will see the third and most important basket of knowledge. I fear that humans will all too easily forget this basket and if they do they will lose their way. Tāne focused his mind and looked deeply, "I see," he said, "the interrelationships upon which the universe is built" (Barnes 2004, p.177).

To see one's own reflection as the connective energy upon which the universe is built is the Third Basket, Kete Tua-tea. The Third Basket of Knowledge connects with the notion of whakapapa, "a genealogical narrative, a story told layer upon layer, ancestor upon ancestor up to the present day" (Te Rito 2007, p.1). Whakapapa begins in the empty place of pure potential before anything has ever happened, which Māori refer to as "the first generation of order Te korekore" (Nicholson, Spillar & Henare 2015, p.285). I hear whakapapa as an invitation to experience connection with the whole of life. To know about a tree, a rock or the beginning of time is to know my whakapapa.

A Maori worldview accentuates a relational ontology in which the spiritual, human and natural worlds are interconnected. Specifically we focus on *Whakapapa*, which refers to the layering of relationships across a relational cosmology (Wolfgramm and Waetford 2015, p.239).

It holds significance that Tāne carried the knowledge in kete; woven flax baskets. Māori consider weaving a sacred task brought from the underworld to be carried out by women: "Māori weaving is full of symbolism and hidden meanings embodied with the spiritual values and beliefs of the Māori people" (Puketapu-Hetet 1989, p.40). As I take photographs of the kete in my house, I want to know how weaving appears in Māori mythology. What does it symbolise? I come across the following statement:

The kete, carried now by many Māori, men and women, in lieu of purses, handbags and briefcases, has become a symbol of liberation from the shackles of an alien

Western European culture, which has tried for two hundred years to submerge and at times obliterate all traces of Māori culture ... The kete evokes strong feelings of unity and togetherness, the weaving together of the people into their families and tribes and into the Māori nation (Puketapu-Hetet 1989, p.44).

For reasons that run deeper than fixed notions of culture I too have carried a kete. I think back to my experience of establishing Newton Central School Inner City Forest in New Zealand in 1993. It was a time when I experienced both connection and separation.



Figure 11: Pencil Case woven by Buckley Fryers

The forest is on a three-acre clay bank beside the motorway that runs past my house. I sit eating breakfast imagining what it would be like if the clay bank that had been stripped bare by the development of the motorway was once again covered by the mantle of dark green bush. Over the coming months ideas turn into actions. My neighbour is a school governor and the school agrees for me and a friend to begin a major re-vegetation project involving all of the children in the school and members of the local community. We follow the patterns of nature. Collecting seeds from a nearby piece of remnant forest, spreading the bank in logs and branches we create the conditions for the forest to grow through a successional process. Eighteen years later the climax species show through, birds return and a self-sustaining forest stands, protected by the Department of Conservation.

The separation lies in the fact that at times being a Pākehā feels like an obstacle. Do I have a right to presume a connection to land that goes beyond the practical? In planting the

forest, my work in gathering and planting of harekeke²³ feels like a bridge between the fracture created by the mechanistic moves of colonialism and Māori relationship to land. This is a collection of New Zealand flax from traditional weavers across the country who untypically had shared their art with a Pākehā man, Buckley Fyers. He donated a selection of the best weaving plants to the Inner City Forest and passed on laws associated with them.

J.R. Journal – April 6th, 2013

On my shelves I see two stones and three woven kete, made by Buckley Fyers. I have kept them because of the pattern that runs through; strong and flexible, bounded and open, full of hidden things, useful and symbolic, practical and philosophical, representative of what I aspire to be.

As I type up my journal entry, I think of Io's advice to Tāne: "Take these two stones with you, they are images of my own eyes and in them you will find patterns on which to form Karakia (the way to oneness) and to teach the three baskets of knowledge to humanity" (Barnes 2004, p.177). I empty out my three kete, excited at the idea of weaving together the threads of my Indigenous self through the invitation offered in the Three Baskets of Knowledge.



Figure 12: The Three Baskets of Knowledge and the Eyes of Io

²³

Māori name for flax (*Phormium tenax*).

Standing on Indigenous Ground

Williams writes of learning to be Indigenous in a global context:

Every person on this planet has the innate human capacity to be Indigenous; that is, to be in intimate relationship or resonance with the world of spirit, the earth, and other human beings (Williams 2012, p.92).

Over the coming months I unearthed more about what being Indigenous meant for me. When I wrote the first draft of Fault Lines, described in the last chapter, I wondered what my family and also Māori would make of it. I had the opportunity to share the paper with Chellie Spiller who is of Māori and Pākehā lineage. Chellie emailed me her response.

What a profound journey you have been on. It was very insightful for me to enter the world differently through your journey, and it's a story that seems to resonate strongly with others. I would love to hear more about your writings on how the Universe Story can be a catalyst for social and environmental change -Chellie Spiller, May 24th, 2013.

Chellie and I stayed in touch and some months later she invited me to contribute to the book she co-edited with Rachel Wolfgramm, *Indigenous Spiritualities at Work: Transforming the Spirit of Business Enterprise* (2015). I asked myself on what grounds I could call my experience Indigenous; I felt exposed. I nervously looked at the list of contributors to see if I was the only Pākehā. My sister Liz commented that my first draft sounded self-conscious and it was. It was not a project I would have volunteered myself for. However through the process of writing the chapter I discovered what others have described as “writing myself home – figuratively and literally into the soul of my Indigenous being” (Williams 2012, p.103). Exploring what it meant to be Indigenous brought me into alignment with the Third Basket of Knowledge. Metzner illuminates my experience:

Indigenous worldviews conceive the fundamental reality of the universe as a continuum, a unitive field or fabric of energy and consciousness, that is beyond time, space, and all forms, and yet within them (1994, p.4).

Through identifying myself as indigenous to the Cosmos, I found my place as one of the contributors to the book, a place that went beneath the fractures of colonialism. Through the process of writing, receiving feedback and re-writing, I found my own ground within alternative views of history to those I was raised with. I endeavoured to hold them critically and un-romantically. As Esborn-Hargens and Zimmerman remind us,

"We have to be careful not to project our current ways of understanding onto yester-year. There is a big difference between being one with one's local bio-region and being one with the entire planet and all humans" (Esborn-Hargens and Zimmerman 2009, p.297).

Evidence shows that Māori stripped the land bare, before they, through necessity, developed an ecological sensibility (Cumberland 1981; Park 1995). Chellie highlighted potentially problematic areas of my approach and mentored me in such a way that I felt safe to be transparent about my experience.

One of the delicate challenges you have in this paper is to show how we can learn from each other and expand our worldview, however, in such a way that it is not construed as appropriation of culture. We want to guide you such that critical Māori readers will understand what you are doing and why –
Chellie Spiller May 2nd, 2014.

J.R. email to Chellie Spiller, May, 14th, 2014

It is not always comfortable to be a Pākehā inquiring within this space. It sometimes feels like walking in land-mined territory. One must walk on one's own ground, which often seems like a very thin and fragmented line. It is not about looking out there, it is about looking at my-self. I do not know how conditioned in colonialist ways of being I actually am. This is why becoming a little bit aware can make it harder to even begin. One is bound to get it wrong, to upset people.

I have reached into Māori culture and pulled out features that I can identify with; a criticism levelled at the historian Michael King and other Pākehā writers (King 1985, p.161). Like King, I am not trying to be Māori. My interest is in exploring and drawing meaning from our mutual 14-billion-year story. A story that was being written long before any differentiations such as Māori and Pākehā evolved. As a New Zealander who has lived away from the country of my birth, it has been particularly powerful to find resonance between the scientific origin story and the Māori creation story, which developed under the same sky, the same soil that raised me. I have also learnt how to enable others to connect with the Universe Story as their own story, by telling the three baskets in ways that are adapted to other contexts.

Travelling with the Three Baskets of Knowledge

In line with Armstrong (2009, p.3), who describes how myth carries a universal license to be told in different ways, I have often shared the Three Baskets using images and characters drawn from the concrete terrain of King's Cross. Spurred on by the question of

how I could enable others to find ownership of the work, I passed the Three Baskets to others to tell in their own way. The following account is from a camp that Global Generation held for twelve young people at Pertwood Farm. For some, it was a first step into being a Generator (Global Generation youth leader). It was also the first time many in the group had been out of London.

On the train, I sat beside Lily, one of our senior Generators. All the way she wrote. What emerged was her version of the Three Baskets of Knowledge, which would provide an overarching narrative throughout the camp. This time, the protagonist of the story was a teenager, like Lily, plugged into thumping music, aware of the contradictions of school policies of equality, in the midst of racist comments filling the hallways. She dreamed of a friendship between a spider and a seagull; she wished she could lead a life that was worth more. The next morning, the seagull appeared in front of Lily and she flew with the seagull out of the city to a gorse and hawthorn copse with a fire pit and a yurt. As she looked into the seagull's eyes, she saw herself and learnt about the First Basket of Knowledge... her hopes and her fears, her challenges and the values that would help her find a way forward.

As we sat together that night in the Pertwood yurt, Lily told her story. This was an invitation for the Generators to introduce themselves to each other through the values they had expressed by coming. With their journals in hand they then considered the question, what does it mean for me to leave London behind?

Camping is very difficult – I don't know if I will be able to sleep at night. I will worry about my family who I am so far away from. There is no turning back; I just have to make the best – Nazifah, 15 years.

Our tent is filled with bugs and it is cold; the toilet has no light or heater. Many like it, but this has made me realise how much I miss the city, the loudness, the fact that there's always someone creating havoc – Kulshum, 16 years.

The next morning, the clouds hung heavy in the sky. Undeterred, the Generators set off up the track. Slowly, they made their way up to the big stone circle, each of them taking a place by the stones, standing in silence; not one flinching from the wind and the rain that was now coming down, even if...

...it was too silent; it was nice being on your own for a bit, but I still prefer being in a room full of people or a city – Kulshum.

As a city kid walking over the hills in the rain was quite a journey for me – seeing all the valleys becoming distanced. The different shades of green looked like a small section of a rainbow – Nazifah.

During the day we explored the Second Basket of Knowledge, the reflection in the seagull's eyes of everything around us, be it rock, person, animal or tree. In the blackness of the night we became animals as we left our torches behind and silently threaded through the forest. By the morning, the Generators were ready to stand in the footsteps of the land... what might it mean to imagine ourselves as the sky, the earth and all that lies between?

I am the sky, I am so beautiful in the daytime with white fluffy clouds and at night I come out with the prettiest stars, but even I have my ugly days, especially when the rain is about. You can always look up to me, whether you are happy or sad, whether you are scared or confident, anything – Kulshum.

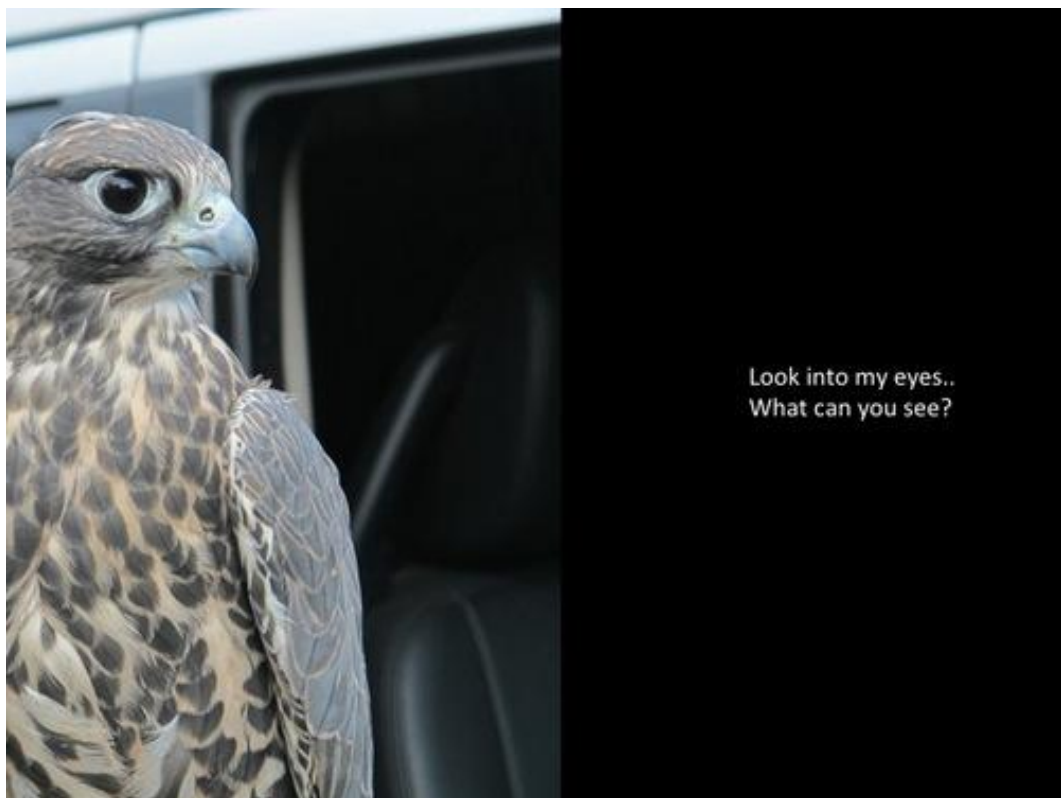


Figure 13: Stories Grown in the Eyes of a Bird

On our last day, a local farmer brought a falcon for the Generators to see. The black shiny eyes of the falcon were a reminder of the Three Baskets. As we approached the final circle, Kulshum said, “Can you tell us the last part of the story – what is in the Third Basket of

Knowledge? I want to get into that zone again.” This was an opportunity to reflect on all that we had experienced over our time together. As Lily asked the seagull what was in the Third Basket, the seagull transformed into the falcon we had just seen. She looked into the falcon’s shiny eyes. She saw the falcon and she saw herself and everything around her. In their own ways, the Generators understood and expressed the Third Basket of Knowledge – the inter-connection upon which the universe is built. Their free-fall writing spoke to me of what being indigenous to the Cosmos is all about.

I am the wind that howls and I am the movement of grass that sways side to side. I am what makes and creates things to grow and flourish as I am the ground beneath your feet. I am the soul within you deep. I am the stream in which you fish. I am the world in which you live. I am your home – Nazifah.

When I first got here I hated it. I tried to like it but I didn’t – the silence, the atmosphere. It wasn’t for me... then I thought I am only here for another day. Let me make the most of it. That’s when I started to understand what nature is – nature is beautiful. Now I feel a part of nature. I am a city girl with a hint of country girl – Kulshum.

Throughout the weekend I felt the power the Three Baskets have to connect individuals to their indigeneity, in other words to a sense of identity that connects us to ourselves, the land and each other as one story. However I felt a degree of trepidation working with Tāne’s story; was I as a Pākehā sharing a story that wasn’t mine to share. Marsden writes, “This legend is part of the corpus of sacred knowledge and as such was not normally related in public” (Marsden 2003, p.57). I was aware that I had not asked permission to use the story. I wrote to Chellie about my concerns and sent her an account of the Pertwood camp. Her response was an important acknowledgement of the indigenous ground I was beginning to stand in:

I love the transformations that have taken place on the journey of your young Generators - I feel very touched by what you are doing. What an honour that the Three Baskets is having this effect. My sense of your piece and where you are taking it is powerful, evocative and a demonstration of how Aotearoa²⁴ is woven into the fabric of who you are and how you are making a difference in the world. You have found your Tūrangawaewae and

²⁴

Māori name for New Zealand.

are now helping others - young and older – to find their place to stand - a place of their own knowing – Chellie Spiller, November 11th, 2013.

Linking Practice to Literature

Indigenous is a word most commonly associated with peoples of long settlement and connection to specific lands who have been adversely affected by European colonialism (Sanders 1999). In this sense Indigenous is not a term that applies to the modern day political construct of 'white people'. However, Martin Luther King scholar and Thomas Berry student Drew Dellinger, who is of European descent, makes a point which speaks to the way I use the word Indigenous. Dellinger argues that before the separating notion of 'whiteness', which was fostered in the colonialist machine, we were all Indigenous.

The present can never be severed completely from the past, there is a sense in which every person, including a white person, is still mystically connected to his or her indigenous roots. In this sense white people are indigenous, but not indigenously white ... this work of reclaiming indigeneity can help us conceive of that which will come after whiteness. Are those of us who are white ready to imagine and create an identity that is deeper and truer than whiteness (Dellinger 2006²⁵)?

Martin Luther King was a leader with a cosmic orientation whose inclusive vision went beyond issues of race. In line with Indigenous traditions, King wrote of God being immanent in nature and appealed to his followers to commune with nature (Dellinger 2006; Sargent Wood 2010; Smiley & Ritz, 2014). Earlier I wrote that the Three Baskets gently demanded understanding of the whole of who I am; self, other and the interconnectivity upon which the universe is built. In several of his speeches Martin Luther King described a perspective that my experience of the three baskets of knowledge echoes.

There are three dimensions of any complete life ... length, breadth, and height. Now the length of life as we shall use it here is the inward concern for one's own welfare. In other words, it is that inward concern that causes one to push forward, to achieve his own goals and ambitions. The breadth of life as we shall use it here is the outward concern for the welfare of others. And the height of life is the upward reach for God. Now you got to have all three of these to have a complete life (King 1967²⁶).

²⁵ Healing whiteness an exploration into the European indigenous soul, <http://tadhargrave.blogspot.co.uk/2006/01/are-white-people-indigenous-drew.html>.

²⁶ http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_the_three_dimensionsof_a_complete_life/index.html

King went on to describe God in terms of awe and wonder in the universe; “the gigantic mountains that kiss the skies as if to bathe their peaks in the lofty blue - something that man could never make ... the stars that bedeck the heavens like swinging lanterns of eternity” (Ibid).

Whiteness and indigeneity have been used divisively and they are words that I have applied to myself cautiously. I am comfortable with the word Pākehā as it speaks of my history. However some Māori scholars write about the need to avoid the binary of Pākehā as the colonising oppressor with little critical consideration of Māori (Rata 2006; Smith 2000; Waitere-Ang 1998). I am not interested in labelling particular sensibilities as the domain of any one culture but rather identifying inherited ways of being that influence my behaviour. Most importantly I want to embody and make visible a deeper current that runs through all things in the universe.

Bergson, vitalism, Māori cosmology ... I did a double take. My story was becoming coherent. Did the philosophy of a people who didn’t consider the land theirs to conquer and own mean they were more aware of a creative and connected impulse, a spiritual impulse that flows through all things? Was this the same un-knowing knowing that had led me to leave New Zealand all those years ago? I pursued the reference that had caught my attention and a few weeks later a brown parcel arrived. Inside was a huge red book, “Indigenous Traditions and Ecology – The Interpreting of Cosmology and Community” edited by John Grim. Eagerly I turned to the chapter by Mānuka Henare, *Tapu, Mana, Mauri, wau, Wairua: A Maori Philosophy of Vitalism and Cosmos*. It felt like a major stepping stone in my journey into Māoritanga to come across Mānuka’s descriptions of the way in which the ‘vitalism’ of Bergson aligns with traditional Māori philosophy.

The big red book revealed more connections. I noted with excitement that the foreword was written by John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, co-author of *The Journey of the Universe*. At the time I didn’t realize John and Mary Evelyn, both students of Thomas Berry, were married and have spent the last 30 years writing and teaching together.

Manuka’s comparison of Bergson’s vitalism to Māori philosophy enabled me find a natural link between my spiritual search, an Indigenous approach to the Universe Story and contributing to Chellie’s book. I found my place through the idea that I am indigenous to the Cosmos. This is a connected identity, beneath the fault lines of everything that has happened, both Māori and Pākehā. Identifying with the vitality of life goes beyond boundaries of the land I was born on, into a bigger story, a universal story.

To claim the kind of authority that comes from being indigenous to the Cosmos is a journey of inhabiting one's own story. To do this I had to learn to work in the ways of story. Even though I grew up in a household full of stories, ranging from the Greek legends to the Chronicles of Narnia, there was still a large part of me that dismissed stories as childish. Karen Armstrong writes: "Myth is about the unknown; it is about that for which initially we have no words ... Myth looks into the heart of a great silence" (2005, p.3). In a conversation I had with Mānuka, he emphasised the Māori perception of the mythico-historical origins of vital life, describing it as a metaphorical view of history. It is a way of being that makes the invisible visible. Is powerful to imagine how story developed as one of the earliest forms of communication in early peoples. "The deep drive to participate in the universe led to stories and myths..." (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.37).

The stories that came most naturally to me grew from the stones, the soil and the seeds. Others were revealed in the eyes of birds. Martin Shaw sheds light on the importance of speaking in the language of the natural world: "When we withdraw the earthy metaphors that need to be wrapped around us like a cloak, the thin air of the literal feeds us many untruths" (2014, p.153). Our reliance on the literal at the expense of other ways of knowing explain why the more we have discovered scientifically about the universe, the less it holds meaning for us (Berry 2006). Myths contain metaphors which allow us to make the expansive connections needed to occupy the universe as our own story: "Metaphor is the great leap, the generous offering of many possibilities contained in one image" (Shaw 2011, p.113). I note here that metaphors of an evolving, expanding, heliocentric universe as we now recognise it were not the symbols Shaw was working with²⁷. When I met him, the stories Shaw told originated from a time when Europeans believed the earth was flat. I asked him about this and he explained that new mythologies take thousands of years to become established. I don't think we have that much time. Unlike Shaw, Joseph Campbell (1986) draws on recent scientific discovery and describes the epic movements of a universe born through murmurings and explosions of inconceivable magnitude, movements of violence, sacrifice and creativity. Stars literally blew themselves apart so that new stars could be born. Like Berry, Swimme and Tucker, Campbell invites us to approach scientific discoveries about the origins of our universe, as a guiding mythology for the challenges of our times. In this regard I see my research in collaboration with others as a contribution to a growing contemporary mythology that, as the astronauts discovered, has the potential to provide a meaningful sense of place and purpose by re-connecting us to the earth as one

²⁷ I attended a storytelling weekend with Martin Shaw in 2013.

harmonious being (Mitchell, 2008). In 2014 Mary Evelyn Tucker introduced me to former PhD student of Stephen Hawking, Jonathan Halliwell²⁸ who is currently a Professor of Theoretical Physics at Imperial College London. In a recent funding proposal I made to the Arts Council, Jonathan describes what our collaboration means to him:

"A few years ago, through interactions with Brian Swimme, one of the authors of Journey of the Universe, and Jane Riddiford and colleagues at Global Generation, I became very interested in the Universe Story as a mythological framework which could provide a sense of place, purpose and inspiration in the education of young people. I believe that science has become so good at stringing together the long sequence of facts which make up the history of the universe that our logical understanding of it has vastly outstripped our ability to truly grasp what it means in human terms. I feel that important steps to fill this gap have been made through the creation of educational events for young people involving the universe story and it has been very rewarding for me to be involved in them" – Jonathan Halliwell, May 2016.

Summary

Working with the Three Baskets of Knowledge helped unearth episodes in my life that were coloured by colonialism. I recalled times when rubbing up against the artificial divide of whiteness brought vulnerability to the surface. I also responded to Marsden's (2003) call to unmask myself, to go beyond the constraints of the rational mind in order to understand Māoritānga. This connected me to a sense of self that went deeper than the fractures of a colonial past. My sense of the Universe Story provided an Indigenous identity and this enabled me, as a Pākehā, to find my place as a contributor to Chellie's book on Indigenous Spirituality.

A significant implication of identifying myself as indigenous to the cosmos was that it opened a storied space within my leadership practice²⁹. 'I, We and The Planet' framed through Tāne's three baskets became alive and accessible. For example I noticed that I began to think of our work as a living story and the Skip Garden as "a poetic space for the

²⁸ <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/j.halliwell>

²⁹ Later I came to think of this as an enchanted space – see chapter 10

imagination to flood into” (Shaw 2011, p.7). This gave room for others to find their own way to connect to the Universe Story, without necessarily needing to call it that.

I often felt apprehensive before telling the Three Baskets of Knowledge, but once I began a different kind of energy took over. As Kulshum, one of the generators on the Pertwood camp, said “Can you tell us the last part of the story ... I want to get into that zone again.” I noticed that it was easier for my Global Generation colleagues to identify with the ecological story of our planet rather than the evolving story of the universe. This led to a gradual change in the way I held the Universe Story. Despite a lack of engagement amongst some individuals, Rod and I continued to include an evolving story of the universe in many of our workshops. There were issues to be resolved about whether our interventions were a colonialist imposition of ideas or an invitation for inquiry, which I write about in the following chapter.

One of the best things that happened was passing the story to others, to re-write in their own words and tell in their own way, whether it was a young generator like Lili, my colleagues, or other educators. Each time I let go and made room for others, I felt them rise up and find meaningful ways to express their place within and as the Universe Story. Chellie wrote to me about working with the Three Baskets of Knowledge.

I think we were both really aware of the responsibility of working with the taonga tuku iho, the cultural treasures that have guided you in your journey – and this responsibility called us both to be sensitive, humble, aware and courageous – Chellie Spiller, September 27th, 2014.

Chapter 7 – Boundaries in a Boundaryless Land

J.R. Journal – August 23rd, 2013

I wake to realise that I am back at the beginning of my inquiry. What is the role of a boundaryless sense of self in creating a living culture? And what is the role of boundary in supporting a boundaryless sense of self?

Negotiating Power

Dwelling within inherited fault lines heightened my awareness of issues of power associated with drawing lines and marking boundaries. The first story in this chapter illustrates how I identified a boundary around Global Generation in order to protect what I consider to be a 'boundaryless' space. The boundary was strong and invisible and appeared when it was needed in relationship to an incident with organised religion. Considering why I felt the need for a boundary raised the question of whether my effort to introduce the Universe Story into Global Generation's practice was also a colonialist way of imposing a single story ideology on others. This made me look more closely at attitudes that I had developed through my spiritual journey, especially in regard to the relationship with high priests of power. I have referred earlier to a deeper sense of knowing. At times this inner impulse revealed a boundaryless sense of freedom. However it also led me into an idealised relationship with a spiritual teacher which lasted for 26 years. In the previous chapter, I wrote of the power of story. A storyteller, and similarly a teacher, with a charismatic style of leadership, combined with limited self-awareness, is the stuff of cautionary fables. This chapter unfolded over several years during which time the circumstances for me and my former teacher changed radically. This relationship is pivotal to why I am interested in collaborative leadership. I describe a journey into aspects of followership and leadership that have shaped my life. Why did I become a follower of a charismatic spiritual leader? Why did I suppress doubts about controlling and oppressive behaviour? The third account in this chapter is about an encounter with two leaders who have been major influences on the way I now approach the leadership of the Universe Story work. They demonstrated the positive implications of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe in that they were passionate about social and environmental action, and embraced difference, especially in terms of the ways Rod and I and the young people we are involved with are applying

Universe Story ideas to an urban context. They also actively encouraged us to step into leadership of work inspired by Thomas Berry's legacy.

Overall these stories point to what collaborative leadership might look like as an alternative to one charismatic leader colonising peoples' minds with a fixed story about how things 'should be'.

Boundaries around Global Generation

An experience in 2013 opened a consideration about the power structures of organised religion, not just the religion of the 1800s but a modern day version of the way the Christian church has colonised meaningful spaces and appropriated myths and rituals the world over:

(In Santiago) the Catholic cathedral is right where the temple of the sun used to be. That's an example of land-claiming by the Christians. You see, they are transforming the same landscape into their landscape by putting their temple where the other temple was (Campbell and Moyers 1988, p.116).

Fast forward and history repeats itself.

I was approached by the Bishop's missionary for the new King's Cross development. Father Jack and I had built a connection over the previous months, sharing meals and discussions in the Skip Garden. There was, however, an unsettling question for me – what was his mission? It appeared to be a fairly significant drive, backed by the money and power of the diocese, to have a visible sole faith presence within the development, and the Skip Garden was deemed a suitable entry point for it.

The developers had been wary from the outset, but they hadn't directly said 'no' to Father Jack. They had hedged the issue by passing the decision to me. Perhaps, they suggested, the church could go through a pilot period renting space in the Skip Garden. The church intended to run activities for the residents from the nearby social housing blocks. They had been given the key to enter the secured precincts of the buildings so they could go door-knocking and depositing flyers. Global Generation would provide space, food and a number of garden-related activities. I initially said 'yes' as we had a good relationship with Father Jack and he was prepared to pay a generous commercial rate for the premises. Early next morning, I woke troubled. How did I feel about having a church banner on our gate? Or to have our name alongside the church's on the flyers that would be dropped in people's doorways? I thought about many of the young people we work with, many of them Muslim, and I felt uneasy.

I arrived at the Skip Garden and almost immediately a conversation opened between my two colleagues, Walter and Silvia, and I. They also had concerns. “Would the residents in the housing blocks, who we are in the early stages of establishing links with, assume we are a church organisation?” asked Walter. “Are we just throwing away the philosophical ground we have fought so hard to create?” added Silvia.

I realised that no money could replace the non-physical and often un-named ‘space’ we have created. It is a space where depth is available without signing up to the power structures of religion. It occurred to me that just as New Zealand Māori were baffled at the idea of owning land, viewing it as inconceivable as owning the sky, how can anyone own God? As I talked with Silvia and Walter it became clear that I would have to cancel the rental arrangement.

I immediately phoned Father Jack. He shared with me the internal conversation he had been having with the Bishop and seemed relieved that I was speaking directly about my concerns. I wrote notes as we talked. Father Jack told me how he had been telling the Bishop that the King’s Cross development is totally different to any other community the church operates in. He said that the church is in every other community in London but, “here we have to find a new way, a way in which the church hasn’t operated before.” “In the past,” he said, “we entered a community with muscle, money and a God-given right, and we can’t do that here.”

As we spoke, Father Jack spoke of issues of power and referred to the atrocities in the church’s name, which he said, were nothing to do with the simplicity advocated by Jesus of Nazareth who had no organisational power behind him. I explained to Father Jack that this situation resonated with the themes of colonialism that were emerging in my doctoral inquiry. I asked if he minded if I wrote about our conversation. He said that would be no problem; I have, however, chosen to give him another name³⁰.

I was curious that neither the developers nor the social housing group dealt with the issue directly. They avoided and deferred and I recognised that, for a minor player within the development site, Global Generation had a significant amount of power and it was philosophical power. Because of my inquiry I felt I stood on solid ground from which to enter the discussion.

Incidents described in this chapter shed light on previous chapters. One of the benefits of sustaining the engaged philosophy sessions described previously, is that invitations for reflection have been embraced within the Global Generation team. After the

³⁰ Soon after Father Jack left King’s Cross and I have not had the opportunity to pursue the inquiry with him.

call with Father Jack, I suggested that all three of us, Walter, Silvia and myself, go and write about our experience. We shared our writing with each other at the end of the day. My writing formed the basis of the account above. Walter emailed me what he had written.

As far as it's important to explore our values together in "engaged philosophy" sessions with GG, exploring the more 'everyday' challenges of life and an organisation together is perhaps more real and impactful for me. But being in a culture where this exploration is done as a matter of course helps and perhaps makes moments and decisions like this more meaningful?

– Walter, August 2013.

Input from Walter and Silvia helped me act decisively. Subsequently our Chair of Trustees, Tony Buckland, said, "I am glad our security system is working." It was a satisfying process as together we unearthed, defined and stood behind the often invisible boundaries of our work together, boundaries that I feel protect a boundaryless space where the spirit of life is free to flow. As Silvia wrote at the time:

I asked myself, what does it mean to be open-minded? And what does it mean to hold on to your principles? We offered our physical space, but what are the implications of offering our space? On a personal level, I was surprised and felt very vulnerable because I hadn't stopped to think about everything and how easily we could let it all go. I thought about the developers; can a charity really become the voice of a big development company to make sure that the formation of a new culture can happen in a new part of London? I felt that this was the strongest time that what we have been discussing in our engaged philosophy sessions took place.

– Silvia Pedretti, August 2013.

In the Shadow of Colonialism

It would have been easy to file Father Jack's story away as a contemporary example of colonisation by the church. However there was more for me to consider about myself in the story, especially if I related it to the fault lines within my background. I had said to Father Jack, "The colonising dimension of the situation echoed the actions of my forebears." The comment stayed with me, what did this mean for me and my leadership practice within Global Generation? Around that time I came across a well-known quote which is often attributed to the Australian Aboriginal educator and activist, Lilla Watson.

If you have come here to help me,
You are wasting your time...
But if you have come because
Your liberation is bound up with mine,
Then let us work together (Aboriginal activist group, 1970s³¹)

The quote was used in a speech given by Watson at the 1985 United Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi. I include Watson's words here because they challenged me to reflect more deeply on whether my efforts to introduce others to the Universe Story were no different than the colonialist drive of my forebears (and Father Jack's church). Did I think I had a superior narrative with which I could 'help' people? In my 2011 doctoral inquiry proposal I wrote:

As Founding Director of Global Generation, many of the ways we work with young people, particularly in terms of reflecting on themselves, come from my experience. The spiritual journey described in this paper is the inner territory that animates and informs much of the work I do. An ongoing and open inquiry is how best to support others, who have taken a different journey, to feel ownership for the work, especially the inner or reflective side of what GG does.

My sister Liz wrote in the margin of my paper, "Perhaps this is the nub of your inquiry?" I had long held the question of how I could support others to feel ownership for our work together, particularly work inspired by Universe Story ideas. I began to realise that what makes all the difference is how the narrative is held. In other words if I was to work with the Universe Story in a non-colonial way I needed to unearth the controlling habits of modernism, in my mind. Linda Turiwhai Smith writes, "There can be no 'postmodern' for us until we have settled the business of being modern" (2012, p.35).

The reach of imperialism into 'our heads' challenges those who belong to colonized communities to understand how this occurred, partly because we perceive a need to decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity (2012, p.24).

Smith is referring to the need to understand how colonisation occurred within Indigenous communities. What might it mean to decolonise my mind, as the progeny of colonisers? Smith challenges practices of imperialistic research, in terms of the lone ethnographer in the 1800s and the well-funded efforts of 21st century academics, who have worked on the basis of distanced objectification of Indigenous communities: "Why do they always think by looking at us they will find answers to our problems? Why don't they look at themselves?" (2012, p.230). Holding a mirror up to myself, and writing from that place

³¹ <https://lillanetwork.wordpress.com/about/>

allowed an unexpected story to come through. It is the story of my spiritual search. I have written about the positive aspects of my spiritual journey that animated and informed much of the work I do. However there are shadows. The spiritual impulse that revealed a boundaryless sense of freedom also led me into an idealised relationship with a spiritual teacher whose way of operating could be viewed as another form of colonialism.

A Deeper Knowing

In Māori myth and in the stories of Martin Shaw, I identified with themes of confusion and quest, challenge and transformation. Tāne, the tallest tree in the forest, ascends from the earth into the innermost realms of Io's dwelling. Shaw introduces the village and the forest in his description of the ordered, seen world and the unseen underworld. It is a world of more than things. The story of Tāne describes the path to become better people. It is also a metaphor for the archetypal journey of the mystic, as he or she travels inwards, seeking ways to find unity with the universe, and to become one with his or her concept or knowing of Io or God or the Supreme Being or the Way.³²

I experimented with writing in a semi-mythic style to explore difficult events in my life, such as a death in the family and an awkward relationship with a colleague. I found that I was able to understand and articulate things that I might otherwise have held back on. Then I used this form of inquiry to explore the dynamics of followership and leadership. As a young woman, when I felt a deeper and unnamed sense of life, I thought of myself as Vivienne, which I later discovered means 'alive'.

The Morepork Story

One night, Vivienne dreamt of the Morepork calling. She woke with a start and knew what she had to do. Going to the back of her closet she put on the purple cape given to her by her great Aunt Erica, a spiritual seeker who lived till she was over 100 and had been inspired by the great Krishnamurti. Suddenly, a fire rose inside Vivienne and she was transported upwards on the wings of an albatross. Flying high above the metropolis, guided by the silvery waters of the River Thames and out into open sea, they travelled till they found the opening of the River Dart. In they went, drawn on by the call of the forest

³²

Maaori.com <http://maaori.com/whakapapa/ngakete3.htm>

and the gentle undulation of the land, eventually landing beside an old farmhouse called Gaia House.

As the green leaves turned to orange and fell in great clumps on the ground, the days shortened, beckoning all inside. The sap sank beneath the soil and Vivienne too drew inward. The days got darker and Vivienne's confidence grew in the vast and mysterious movement beneath the surface. She slowed down, listened and became a part of it. Her cells spoke to her, telling stories of all they had been. She gathered her cape around her as it was frightening to see herself in the faces of old men and women, rats and foxes, fish, amoebas and dust. Despite her fear, she stayed still, watching the current of life moving forward.

As time went by, she noticed the voices of the people in the retreat house; a new wind was beginning to blow and she paid attention. It drew her into the kitchen and she stood silently in the shadows listening and looking. Around a long table, people were talking excitedly, fire coming from their eyes. Outside, heavy rain was falling and thunder boomed in the distance; a flash of lightning hit the window. Vivienne heard a wizard's name and a shock went through her. At the end of the kitchen, a man stood silently stirring a huge cauldron of broth. He turned to her and said, "My name is Ridwar³³. Tonight, I will take you to see the wizard."

In the darkness, Vivienne climbed on to the back of Ridwar's iron grey horse and they ventured forth along the narrow winding lanes. As the branches made patterns above their heads, Vivienne heard the trees whispering to her... tread carefully, listen deeply and the forest will not forget you.

Ridwar, Vivienne and the grey steed came to a stone cottage. They stepped inside, amidst a crowd of 30 people, squeezed together in a tiny room with a blazing wood fire. After some time, a wizard appeared and sat on a faded green arm chair in the corner. Vivienne

³³

In this story, Ridwar is the name I gave to Rod who, long before we were a couple, was one of the managers at the retreat house.

didn't understand what he was saying and she didn't particularly like him, at least not in the normal way, but something was attracting her.

The next night, she found herself climbing on to the back of Ridwar's horse, making the journey to the tiny room with the blazing fire. On the second night the wizard spoke to her, "Look inside yourself with a very bright light. Look for the gold that glistens inside the deep dark cave." There was an intense atmosphere in the room: focused, relaxed and serious at the same time. Something was occurring in the silence.

On the third night, the wizard said he would speak with Vivienne on her own; Vivienne told him of her plans to visit the Masters of Tibet and the sages of India. Then she heard herself saying, "Can you be my guide? Can I write to you?"

The wizard looked at her and said: "It's already happened, a process has begun, right here, right now, inside your very own self." He showed her a picture of himself and a very old wizard; Vivienne felt a sense of deep familiarity. "I know that face", she said. "It is your own face, my dear," said the wizard. In the distance, Vivienne heard the sound of the owl... morepork... morepork; it reminded her of the poem she had written many years before about the spiritual calling when she was little more than a child. The wizard looked at Vivienne and said, "You have found the pot of gold at the bottom of the rainbow".

I have tried to take this story out of the thesis several times and note that I still feel vulnerable telling it. I decided to leave it in as it is foundational to who I have become. It is about the spiritual ground I stand on. And there is more to the story of Vivienne and the wizard which has coloured my experience of leadership. Campbell and Moyers claim a myth is a story about gods and explain how "a god is a personification of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe. The myths are metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being" (1988, p.28). In this sense gods are the personification of intangible forces experienced inside ourselves. This can mean externalising power on to others and diminishing confidence in one's own experience. My Catholic childhood was imbued with the view that there was a god in the sky who knew everything who had special representatives on earth. As I grew older I thought I had gone beyond trusting the 'high priests of power'. When I worked for Rise Phoenix, a community arts

organisation, the notion of any form of hierarchy, let alone having a job title was an anathema for many of my colleagues. It was then that I first began asking questions about hierarchy. These questions were also fuelled by a back story of a different order. Despite my seemingly liberal views, a belief in the mythic notion of an omnipotent god dies hard. The early New Zealand settlers were pulled by the promise of paradise in the Arcadian dream. For me it was meeting a spiritual guru at a young age that held the promise of paradise. Like the visions of many charismatic and cult leaders this translated into "an inspirational new paradigm, capable of transforming an otherwise impure reality" (Tourish 2011, p.218). For many years I was blind to the limitations of the guru's Kingdom, where an overtly autocratic leadership style held sway.

*The King Story*³⁴

Vivienne followed the wizard, who became a king and was treated as an all-powerful god. In time the king gathered large numbers of followers around him. His kingdom was infused with an electrifying sense that, just as billions of years ago in the depths of the ocean individual cells learnt to make the fishes in the sea and you and me, now human beings were coming together to make an even larger organism. The king warned his subjects against becoming too dependent on him and at the same time he did everything he could to make them loyal. The myth grew that his kingdom was free from troubles; it was a paradise in which miracles were taking place all the time.

The king liked the idea of being a king just a little bit too much and he made sure no one said a bad word about him. He loved to breathe the fine air of the mountain tops and he demanded that the tower of his castle be built higher and higher till he and his favourite followers could reach the sky. No longer nourished by the rich, dark soil that lay beneath his feet, deaf to the guidance in the rhythms of the land, he grew proud and ever grander in his plans. He sent out royal decrees about his own integrity, no longer caring for the people in his palace; it was all about the kingdom. Meanwhile on the ground his loyal subjects worked harder and harder to find money to grow the king's tower. The earth became parched and the flowers grew no more.

³⁴

Co-written with Rod Sugden

Vivienne never made it to the top of the tower. She wouldn't surrender to the king's will and he banished her from living in his kingdom. In many ways this set her free. Living in the forest Vivienne was forced to draw on a more independent side of herself; she found strength in the flourishing of the soil and the seeds. Even so her devotion to the king held strong and she would always go to listen to him speaking from the golden balcony at the top of his tower.

The king spoke out strongly about the lies and selfishness of many other kings who had fallen prey to the corrupting ways of power. Like many before him he believed he had a plan that would change the world and sent his ambassadors to grow a movement across the far corners of the earth. The problem was that as the weeks and months went by he never stopped to look at himself and what he was doing and confusion grew all over the kingdom.

One day Vivienne heard that a rebellion had happened in the top of the tower. The king's closest subjects noticed that the king wasn't living up to his royal decrees. They banded together and with great courage brought a huge mirror to the top of the tower. The king fought with all his might to look away, he said I will never doubt what I am doing. With an almighty blow he smashed the mirror to the ground. One of his subjects, a quiet brave man, picked up a small shard of the broken mirror and held it up to the king's face. The king caught a glimpse of himself. He saw his own broken face, his hopes, his fears, his pride and dishonesty. No-one knew if he would ever lead again, but what made people feel safe was that the king agreed to take off his jewelled crown and step down from the tower.

When I was doing my MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice, Peter Reason gave an impassioned presentation on the development of worldviews. In the space of two hours, he talked us through Mythos of ancient Greece, to Logos of the Roman Empire, to Medieval Theos, to Bacon's Mechanos. He concluded with a description, inspired by Skolimowski, of an evolutionary Telos in which we experience ourselves as part of an emerging whole, a new vision emerging which we can sense but cannot see. The sentiment of Peter's talk resonated deeply with me and I looked forward to speaking with him about it. I happened to have with me a copy of a magazine edited by my spiritual teacher at the

time, who I will call David (not his real name). The issue focused on the age old debate between science and religion in the context of evolution. After the session, I showed Peter the magazine; he looked at the contributors and gave a hasty response: "David and Ken Wilber, are they your gurus? They're such imperialists." I gasped inwardly and quietly said, "Yes in a sense, you could say they are", although, strictly speaking, I would have only put David in the category of a guru. I look back now and think that Peter did me a service. His challenging comment encouraged me to inquire more deeply, more independently. At that moment, I knew that if I was to have any real weight, I had to find out for myself what was important to me, beyond the ideas I had inherited from my spiritual teacher.

It would be dishonest to deny the huge influence that David has had on my life. Although I am no longer his student, I look back with appreciation on aspects of his message which illuminated my own heart, a heart which I experience as not separate from the hidden heart of the cosmos (Swimme 1996). It was through David's magazine I was introduced to the work of Teilhard de Chardin and Brian Swimme. Much later I recognised David's approach was flawed by his privileging of the evolutionary drive towards progress within the human spirit, at the expense of an ecological dimension, which I would suggest is the territory of care. Like Teilhard (Berry 1982), the desolation of the earth seemed outside David's concern. Like Ken Wilber (McIntosh 2007), David tended towards generalisations based on a single narrative. At times I felt uncomfortable but didn't feel free to admit this. David's autocratic leadership influenced my ambivalence about the word 'leadership'. Time revealed that his was not an enabling creed. In many ways it was a colonialist creed. For many years I laboured under the thought, 'who was I to consider myself a leader'. Because of the style of David's leadership, I also wondered if being 'a leader' was even a good thing.

I discovered that 'high priests' can only take you so far. As described in the 'King Story', the limitations of a single story, guru-centred paradigm eventually caught up with David. In July 2013, after considerable pressure from his closest students, he stepped down from the role of guru and formal leader of his worldwide organisation.³⁵

³⁵ I spoke with David 18 months after he stepped down from his organisation. He was in a process of trying to come to terms with many of the things I have written about here and apologised for his behaviour.

A Different Kind of Leadership

The day that we had been preparing for had finally come. For more than ten years both Rod and I had been reading about the Universe Story and now we had an opportunity to host the co-author of the book and the producers of the film Journey of the Universe. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim were waiting for us on the street outside the hotel we had booked for them. As we walked through the streets of King's Cross we plunged into deep conversation. "What is it that touches you about Teilhard de Chardin?" Mary Evelyn asked. Inwardly I gulped; how could I answer that? "I don't understand everything he writes but somehow he communicates the music of creativity and connection," I hear myself say. Slowly we make our way through the grandeur of St Pancras station, under the huge glass ceiling and up the majestic stairs of the hotel. We cross into the new King's Cross development and I explain Global Generation's footprint from the tops of the buildings to the public spaces. I feel myself talking fast, wildly weaving from the cosmic to the concrete, from education to enterprise, from the colonialist story of land to the future. I am struck at their quality of attention. They seem to be interested in everything and both Rod and I are finding ways to express more than we often have a chance to say. We had both felt nervous, what would these two Yale professors make of *our* interpretation of the Universe Story. As we sit and plan the film screening and workshop we would be doing with them two days later, they listen intently and seem keen for us to lead things our way. I take note; they are curious and supportive of different interpretations and applications of the Universe Story. Only at one point does Mary Evelyn intervene: "It's really important for you to show the film as one whole" she says. Rod and I spoke about our experience that evening. We were both surprised and empowered by the way Mary Evelyn and John had encouraged us to lead things in our own way and there was more to come.

At the end of the Saturday-morning workshop in the Skip Garden we had planned to create the space for Mary Evelyn and John to lead a plenary, which we felt would be a respectful way of summing up our time together. They suggested we sit in a circle. Suddenly John started to chant, a full hearted incantation from the Native American tribe that has adopted him. Next they asked for Rod and I and two of our young Generators, who have been Ambassadors for our work, to sit in the middle of the circle facing North, South, East and West. Turning to the workshop participants, Mary Evelyn said, "I invite all of you to share what you hope for Rod, Jane, Lili and Nene in their leadership of the Universe Story work.." Each person showered us with blessings. For Rod and I who had spent so many years in the shadow of a teacher, who had insisted with the tyranny of an almost military regime, that things were done his way, the experience was healing. We were now free to stand in our own shoes. I experienced this simple ceremony as an initiation into leadership of the teachings of Teilhard and Thomas Berry.

Since their visit Mary Evelyn and John have continued to be interested in our very urban application of the universe story. They have included one of our videos in their programme at Yale³⁶. I have written about Global Generation's work for the Teilhard Newsletter which John edit's. They have also introduced Rod and I to a vibrant community of people from around the world, who are working in their own ways with themes inspired by Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry, some of whom we have collaborated with, including Jonathan Halliwell, Jennifer Morgan and the Deep Time Journey Network³⁷ and Art Buchbinder's Biology of Story Project³⁸.

Linking Practice to Literature

I discovered that colonialist tendencies are insidious and often hard to discern, in a spiritual context which paraded as a doorway into a more creative and connected paradigm. Tourish (2011) maintains this is the nature of a cult. My experience with David has made me wary of contributing to cultism, either as a follower or a leader. As Tourish (2011) points out, elements of cultism are not exclusive to spiritual organisations, they are widely distributed in many organisations. Tourish describes how the core principle of a cult is a compelling and transcendent vision and he lays out the "interlocking ingredients of cultish dynamics" (2011, p.216). I recognise all of them:

- a compelling vision (the vision being of a transcendent or totalistic character, capable of imbuing the individual's relationship to the organisation with a higher purpose)
- intellectual stimulation (of a kind that seeks to motivate followers to intensify their efforts in support of the vision, compellingly articulated by the group's leaders)
- promotion of a common culture (a set of norms which specify particular attitudes and forms of behaviour deemed to be appropriate)

Tourish also writes of punitive measures towards non-conformity with the dominant story and I am aware these can be subtle and hidden. Why had I ignored some of the behaviour I witnessed in David and those close to him? Jackson and Parry write "you will put up with leadership behaviour that is at odds with your ideals if belonging to the group is very important to you" (2011, p.58). While I agree, I also feel the reason for compromise runs deeper than wishing to belong to a group; it is to do with intangible aspects of leadership that are sacred (Grint 2010) and enchanting (Ladkin 2006).

³⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpkdDzgx0ZA>

³⁷ <https://deeptimejourney.org/>

³⁸ <http://biologyofstory.com/#/main?entity=jane-riddiford>

Man has throughout the ages been seeking something beyond himself, beyond material welfare - something we call trust or God or reality, a timeless state – something that cannot be disturbed by circumstances, by thought or by human corruption...And not finding this nameless thing of a thousand names which he has always searched, he has cultivated faith – faith in a saviour or an idea – and faith invariably breeds violence – (Krishnamurti 2010, p.1)

I was aware of Krishnamurti's cautions about leadership and religions by the time I met David but in my inexperience I felt Krishnamurti was wrong. It is complicated territory. The pull towards an unseen, un-nameable world meant I needed to cross a boundary from the known to the unknown. Ladkin describes how, rather than exclude us, boundaries also hold the potential of enabling us to "transition into uncharted territory" (2006, p.174). The relationship with a charismatic leader can give us the courage to cross boundaries into uncharted territory. With David there were long periods in which I had the intoxicating experience of a boundaryless sense of self. Keith Grint writes of the sacred as a necessary component of effective leadership:

Post heroic models of leadership are unviable if they undermine the sacred nature of leadership and that in turn would destabilize the ability of an organisation to function (Grint 2010, p.104).

The history of the church and my own experience reveals that the sacred, when associated with charismatic leaders, is inevitably fraught with paradox; it is in one breath empowering and disempowering.

It is into this permanently unstable world that leaders, especially charismatics, step, offering certainty, identity and absolution from guilt and anxiety to replace – and displace – the moral quagmire and purposeless existence that existentialism reveals. Thus leaders choose to lead and followers choose to follow and the latter choose to avoid responsibility for leading – though followers may explain their choice as foisted upon them by circumstances, fate or whatever serves the same purpose. Absoluteness and absolution are the twin promises of this fabled land (Grint 2010, p.12).

Of one of my first meetings with David I wrote, "There was an intense atmosphere in the room: focused, relaxed and serious at the same time. Something was occurring in the silence." Grint describes the role of silence in the sacred, "an attitude of reverence or awe, a silence in the presence of the divine" (Ibid, p.91). He goes on to warn of how within a religious leadership context silence has also been used as a force of control in which non-believers and heretics are 'silenced' (Ibid, p.92) and that was also my experience.

Enchantment is an ambiguous, potent and problematic word. Initially enchantment seemed to me to be an entirely positive quality. The word spoke to me of the music of

connection and creativity that brings the Universe Story to life. Berry and Swimme (1994) suggest that the adventure of the universe depends upon our capacity to hear that music.

"The vibrations and fluctuations in the universe are the music that drew forth the galaxies and stars and their powers of weaving elements into life. Not to hear such music? If autism or deafness had interrupted the music at any time in this fifteen-billion year event, the symphony would have suddenly gone silent" (Berry and Swimme (1992, p.44).

For me the atmosphere in those first meetings (and subsequent ones) with David was enchanting. Ladkin writes, "charismatic leaders enchant their followers" (2006, p.166). She goes on to describe how the root of the word enchant derives "from the Latin in contare, to sing (Ibid, p.167). However Ladkin reminds us that the word "enchant' can also mean 'to put someone under a spell' or 'to delude' (New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998) – to dupe in other words" (Ibid). For me that spell held the promise of connection to a deeper part of myself and an opportunity to belong to a community of like-minded people. Like many religions, over time, David's community become a fixed and oppressive regime.

Our human and also our cosmic story is one of connection and finding the courage to let go in order for creativity to flourish. This theme is reflected in the early stages of our universe. Thomas Berry, Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme describe how diversity is an essential condition for the creativity of the universe. Within the first half a million years independent dynamic systems broke away from a larger enveloping network. The vast cumulus cloud broke into smaller clouds that collapsed into clusters of galaxies of different shapes and sizes.

As long as a system is tightly held within a larger system, it is dominated. But as it becomes free its intrinsic potentialities come forth and are amplified so that something new can enter into existence (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.18).

In my interest in growing towards a more collaborative style of leadership, my first response was to dismiss charismatic leadership as ultimately colonialist, oppressive and disabling. However, a more nuanced approach does not throw away the power of individual charisma, which can give others the confidence needed to cross boundaries into uncharted territory, but rather questions the type of charisma that is at play. Referencing Howell and Avolio (1992), Ladkin (2006, p.176) suggests that charismatic leadership can be either generative or degenerative; the determining factor is whether or not followers are empowered through the encounter or diminished by it.

"Personalised charisma is used for the self-aggrandizement of the leader, whereas socialised charisma leads to beneficial community outcomes ... which form is embodied rests with the leader and his or her motives" (Ladkin 2006, p.176).

Summary

The paradox of promise and oppression within my spiritual journey illustrates why I felt the need to protect a boundaryless land from what I perceived to be the colonising power of the Bishop's Missioner as he tried to encroach on the boundaries of the Skip Garden. Writing about my relationship with a charismatic leader as a mythic story highlighted a hierarchical form of leadership where I allowed my mind to be colonised and my confidence and creativity diminished through the imposition of rigid ideas born of a single story. A follower is particularly vulnerable when a charismatic leader transmits a sense of the sacred. The inquiry outlined in this chapter made me reflect on the practices I have introduced to the young people and my colleagues in Global Generation; silent walks, sitting still, storytelling and free fall writing. Arguably they are enchantments, in that these practices are designed to open a doorway into a less bounded sense of self. Grint and Ladkin focus on the importance of ways of knowing that enable us to stand in boundaryless, uncharted territory. In the previous chapter I shared an account of leading young people on a silent morning walk across the land at Pertwood. The writing from the young generators revealed an enchanted way of knowing that helped them feel a closer connection not only with each other but also with the land. I maintain that the rediscovery of enchantment is called for if we are to spiritually and psychologically find ourselves within the vastness of the Universe. However, in terms of my core question: what are the implications for me of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe, it has been important to ask what *kind* of leadership is required for this, if I am to avoid the certainty and imposed uniformity I have experienced from an enchanting and charismatic leader? I don't think it can ever be assumed that one is free of the influence of the colonialist narrative. Hence in this chapter I did not answer the question of whether or not my work with the Universe Story was another form of colonialism. It was a question I carried forward, with more awareness of what this might mean and how insidious colonialist tendencies can be.

Writing the stories in this chapter brought reflections on the events described in the last chapter. For example, during the weekend I spent with mythologist Martin Shaw I was mesmerised by a compelling transmission of energy as he told stories of forests, hags and the severed heads of cows. I also noticed that when Martin was in the room all the discussion was directed towards him, there was no room for dialogue between participants.

Similarly I experienced a strong transmission of energy with David, which commanded attention and often silenced those around him. I became more attentive to the power I hold as the founder of an organisation and the way in which others look towards me. Could I hold this power lightly and consciously? In the last chapter I explained the importance of passing the Three Baskets of Knowledge story to others to tell. Similarly I realised that if my colleagues were to find ownership and leadership of our work together, I needed to encourage them to develop and work with reflective practices in their own ways.

In the previous chapter, I wrote about the Three Baskets of Knowledge and described how the First Basket points to a sense of self that is connected to all things and without boundary. This chapter highlights another aspect of the first basket of knowledge; understanding of oneself as one truly is. This is a call for the humility to let go in the face of the temptation of personalised charisma.

Chapter 8 – The Winds of the Universe

Walter was brave to say he did not feel like he could disagree. Perhaps he was influenced by the same force that compelled people to obey the King in your story – the desire to be part of a group. This is an example of the way group dynamics can stymie the flow of ideas in an organization and inhibit its ability to evolve. At the same time I understand that an organization must have some values and people need to buy in to those values for things to work. Complicated ground! Ultimately though, Walter did feel able to express that feeling, and you as a leader were unsettled by it. You were able to put a mirror up to yourself and to Global Generation and the reward was really powerful. Cool! - Sean Conway, November 23rd, 2014.

Finding Ethical Orientation

The above comment was written by my nephew Sean, who read an early draft of this thesis. Linking the dynamics in the King's story to Walter's story³⁹ was a connection I hadn't made. It explained why I was troubled by the thought that I wasn't making enough room for disagreement and highlighted the need for self-reflection. I also noted the words: "an organization must have some values and people need to buy into those values for things to work. Complicated ground!"; what did this mean in practice?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, highlighting the problems of charismatic leadership made me wary of debilitating power dynamics in strongly held individual leadership. In my summary I wrote of the need to let go and empower others. If I completely let go in the name of inclusivity, would I lose an ethical orientation for Global Generation's work?

The greatest danger to the human community may be loss of its will to carry on the cosmic and numinous intentions within itself. The danger is the loss of internal vitality and a cooling down of life energies. It is precisely at this time that these energies are needed in a new vigour of expression ... The real skill is to raise the sails and to catch the power of the wind as it passes by (Berry 2006, p.136).

³⁹

See Chapter 5

In this chapter I share a situation in which I held on to ethical values and principles of Global Generation tightly, where I exercised leadership that was forceful and excluding of some. I experienced this as responding to numinous intentions inside myself. This raised the question of how situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe influenced my values. It was a situation where in order to protect the integrity of Global Generation I felt I needed to take a strong individual stand to ensure the winds of the universe would be behind our work. I realised that seeing myself as an evolving interconnected cosmic process provided me with a particular ethical orientation and shaped the values from which I made choices.

I also describe how the challenge of a difficult situation motivated me to open up dialogue with my colleagues about Global Generation's ethos. I was curious about the ways in which metaphors drawn from the land and the wider cosmos were used by my colleagues to articulate the dynamics of the way we work together. I use the second story in this chapter to share the questions and choices that arose for me in producing an autoethnographic account, which by its very nature is complicated ground.

Boundaries within Global Generation

A situation occurred within the Global Generation team which, as I saw it, threatened the ethics and integrity of our practice. Two members of our team, who were both in long-term relationships, engaged in a clandestine affair with each other, without the knowledge of their partners. I felt compelled to take a strong stand, which was not easy. It took a long time (more than a year) to write the following account. What happened revealed that I expected a consistency between the messages we put out to young people and what we do privately; this extended beyond working hours. At first, I wanted to avoid the whole situation. I was aware that if I challenged what was going on, I would be raising the bar for myself, in that other people would have the right to judge how much integrity they felt I brought to my leadership of Global Generation. Aware of the shortcomings of my former spiritual teacher, which had recently come to light, I wondered what others might see in me. I feared that an overly harsh response on my part towards a moral issue could be perceived as enforcing unrealistic and cult-like expectations around "particular attitudes and forms of behaviour deemed to be appropriate" (Tourish 2011, p.216).

Rather than the details of the situation itself, I want to share the process I went through in order to find an orientation from which to make a choice that I could stand behind, and the effect this had on my colleagues.

I was at the end of the garden when I heard a voice, “I need to tell you something – but I want you to promise not to tell anyone.” It was the voice of an individual I will call Stuart. “Sure” I said, unthinkingly, and we both went and sat down in the garden shed, carefully closing the door behind us. I was shocked and disappointed by what I heard and my mind felt numb in terms of how to respond. I had only been told because Stuart’s partner had found out about the affair and insisted he come clean with me. Stuart insisted that I didn’t tell the other person involved (who I will call Ella), that his partner or I knew anything. For several weeks, I did nothing apart from asking Stuart not to share this information with others connected to Global Generation.

I was due to go on a ten-day meditation retreat. Throughout the retreat I struggled to let go of my thoughts; what Stuart had said haunted me. As uncomfortable as it was, I appreciated the space to think clearly. I knew I had to openly discuss what had happened with both people involved and why I felt it compromised us, as an educational organization that works with young people. It was the deceit of the situation that troubled me. For me, it wasn’t about the need to be perfect – none of us are – but about being willing to face things, which I know from my own experience is seldom an elegant and straightforward process. I resolved that, if Stuart and Ella were willing to find a different and more transparent way forward, I was willing to support and work with both of them. If they did not feel it was an issue of concern to the organisation then I did not feel we could renew their contracts. Both of them were good at their jobs and important members of the team. Taking a stand might risk not only losing both of them but also others and perhaps the whole organisation. Would others think I was over-reacting and imposing unrealistic expectations? Despite my concerns, it was empowering to find that I was willing to risk Global Generation falling apart rather than support a compromise in integrity.

Once I realized I had to act, I was aware of being guided by a sense of cosmic law. It was not about following an external set of written rules, but adhering to an inner sense of a larger order of interconnectedness. I remember feeling that if I ignored the situation the winds of the universe would not be behind the work. I felt that inaction would compromise an intangible and precious authority: the moral and spiritual ground I stand on.

As soon as I returned from retreat I temporarily suspended Stuart’s engagement with us. Ella was away on holiday. I needed to let key people know in a discreet way that something was up. Unbeknown to me, Stuart had already spread the story to several others, committing them all to pledge secrecy. They felt compromised and confused as they assumed I knew and wondered why, up until this point, I had not done anything. Once they knew something was in the wind, they opened up to me about what they knew. One of them wrote me an email apologising for her silence, saying, “I am happy that I work for an organisation that has clear moral standards.”

As Stuart had ignored his promise, and shared his story with others in the team and an external stakeholder, I then felt free to discuss the issue with our Chair of Trustees, who was supportive of my approach, acting as a regular sounding board. He also said to me, “many companies would simply brush this kind of thing under the carpet, but I know that is not what Global Generation is about”. I had never dealt with anything like this before and felt way out of my depth, rehearsing over and over in my mind what I should say. Coaching from our Chair and two friends, both experienced organizational professionals, was invaluable in terms of enabling me to find the line between being rigidly uncompromising and treating each party equally and fairly.

Unfortunately Stuart did not appreciate or perhaps even understand my response. After several meetings with Stuart, I decided to sever any form of engagement between him and Global Generation.

Raising the issue with Ella was difficult and at first she denied it and left Global Generation for several days. I was surprised at how much I empathised with her response and did not hold it against her. She decided to return and used the incident as an opportunity to inquire and develop, thanking me for bringing the issue to a head and encouraging her to make serious decisions inside herself.

Some people in the team were unaware of what had happened, and out of respect for Stuart’s and Ella’s privacy, I didn’t share the details. However I was asked why Stuart was no longer working with us. I explained that something had happened with Stuart that had compromised our organisational values and because he didn’t agree it was an organisational issue and had become aggressive with me, we would not be engaging with him again. Fortunately he worked with us on an occasional basis, so termination of employment was not difficult.

Over a year later I shared this account with Ella and she emailed me the response below and agreed for it to be included in the thesis.

That story is still sore and I don't want that pain to go away. Having something painful it is a good way to remember, to carry humility, to feel human, not perfect, not superior... and it's difficult to read and accept that I was the one who gave you an amazing case study for your thesis.

Yes, I didn't say straight away about what happened but I think that's a protective instinct and it takes a while to admit our actions. At first I struggled to understand why nobody who knew what was going on had come to me in the months before saying, these are the clear moral standards of the

organisation, what are you doing? Especially considering the 'sharing' and friendship we have had. But now looking back I wonder if it is possible to help people who are making mistakes without preaching. When should we intervene? What are the boundaries? What matters is that in the end I was supported, I didn't feel judged by anyone. I was accepted with my mistakes. I am deeply thankful Jane for what you did and the second chance you gave me...

The thing I am sure about is that, whatever its name, this sense of belonging to something bigger and older than our life is making things happen in my work and in my life.

In the course of the Stuart and Ella incident our Chair of Trustees asked me if employees were fully aware of the ethical expectations I held for the organisation. If ethical values were not discussed and open to question, how could I expect others in Global Generation to live up to them and more importantly how could we grow a shared ethos between us. We had agreed some months before that our most important value is inquiry. Now was an opportunity to see how this worked in areas where it really mattered. I wanted to hear what others felt Global Generation's ethos was or should be. I thought about my comment the 'winds of the universe would not be behind the work'. What did this really mean? Was there a connection between ethical values and the dynamics of the universe? I was curious to see what would emerge in the dialogue between us.

The Clock Tower Story

Thanks to the generosity of a local entrepreneur, who loaned us his flat, the staff team left the Skip Garden and spent the afternoon in the lofty heights of the St Pancras Clock Tower, expressing through images and words what Global Generation's culture is. Sitting in a circle we built a thread of dialogue between us. At first it was slow and somewhat awkward. "When I think of our culture I think of fire and respect," offered Sally.

Rachel followed on, "The thread that ties it all together is sharing and exploring our values, but what is the point of what we are doing? Why are we all here? What is the higher purpose? It seems we are all pretty clear about that. It is all tied in with our aim for young people to create a sustainable world that they want to live in."

"Yes," said Susie, "that's what makes it different working at Global Generation. It is not just a job, it is the values we all hold and try and live by."

Nicole spoke next “...wanting to move the work forward is linked to me wanting to move myself forward.”

I felt moved by the level of honesty and humility in the room. “What I experience in my work with young people is a double feeling,” said Silvia, “I feel lucky to have this job and, at the same time, I feel very challenged because you are not just a worker; you represent something... it is a continuous double reflection from me to the others who visit the garden and the others to me.”

Showing us a picture Nicole had made of creativity which had a strong border, Rod reminded us that boundaries are also an important part of the Global Generation culture. Nicole explained, “... for some people, it is only about creativity and process but if you don’t have clear boundaries how can you create positive action in the world?”

Manpreet was sitting silently, waiting for the moment she could jump in. Rod gave a gentle nudge ... “And you, Manpreet?” Manpreet took the conversation further. “The boundaries,” she said, “are like the cracks from volcanoes in that they are constantly changing, they’re flexible, and when you have a sense of this you feel you are moving forward and you want to keep evolving and growing in step with the things we are doing in the local and the wider world. It’s also scary, because as a team we have become so close and we are connected in so many ways in the work we do and the values we hold. It shines a light and makes me grapple with other elements in my life outside of Global Generation.”

We had planned to explore potentials *and* challenges of growing a shared ethos and this was beginning to enter our discussion. However half of the people in the room were speaking and the silence from the other half was becoming uncomfortable. How could we bring the others in without putting them on the spot? Rod made a suggestion, “Perhaps those that haven’t spoken could describe the art work they did.” One by one people spoke up and the conversation began to flow around the whole group.

“My drawing is of the garden of a thousand hands and I represented it by people sitting in a circle,” Jessie, one of our chefs, said. “The ritual of sitting in circles is so fundamental to what we do. I have sat in circles with so many random people in the Skip Garden Lunch and Learning⁴⁰ sessions and in Twilight Gardening⁴¹.”

“Yes,” said Nicole, “it’s about being human together.”

⁴⁰ Lunch and Learning are bi-weekly sessions Global Generation runs which bring together construction workers and local children.

⁴¹ Twilight Gardening sessions take place bi-weekly after work and provide an opportunity for King Cross business employees and local residents to volunteer.



Figure 14: Circles are Axiomatic of Global Generation by Jessie Pitt

“I did a drawing with double headed arrows,” said Paul, “because what we create isn’t one way, it isn’t just flowing out of us it is also flowing into us. When we do a workshop it is not about an end result of building a table or a chair. It is about the energy we create around the things that we do... and I have seen you, Jane; you use silence in circles in a very powerful way. People come down from wherever they are into this equitable playing field.”

“I appreciate you saying that,” I said, “but so much is possible because the space is held amongst the group. It really makes a huge difference.”

This was a cue for Rachel to follow on and what she said took us deeper. “I agree,” said Rachel. “The magic between us and others is really important and this afternoon is really well-timed as we haven’t been coming together as a team so often over the last couple of months. It’s important for our practice to stay fresh and alive; that we are not just doing it with others. We need to keep coming together in this way with each other.”

“Yes you’re right,” I replied. “This is the real work. If we are putting a strong message out to young people then we have to consistently try and embody those messages ourselves.” I was referring to the last few months when living up to our message had created challenge and required serious boundary setting.

Paul reminded me of how much hard work this takes. He said, “We are always going to be the duck. People see the duck on the water, but they don’t see the paddling underneath. There is a lot of paddling in what we create and we mustn’t forget that it isn’t done with ease. People work extraordinarily hard to create that special moment, that alchemy. It is almost like a life force, this energy that goes in all directions. It is amorphous but you can focus it and bring it together and that is the alchemy in bringing it together.”

In the next part of the dialogue people started using cosmic and ecological metaphors.

“A big part of what we do is finding the right language for experiences that are often hard to describe.” I said. Susie took my comment further. “It really works when we use plants as metaphors, it makes it very tangible. For example I always thought that plants sucked things out of the soil, but today in Paul’s presentation I learnt that plants give back to the soil as well. I think about all the best stories, they are all based in nature, based on natural phenomenon that we can all relate to. That is what is so exciting; we are developing this new culture as science develops and we are reflecting about ourselves in relationship to the new discoveries.”

Rod responded, “It’s like seeing the whole in something very small and then you can actually see principles in the whole universe process. Like with a plant you can see the principles of giving and receiving, and giving and receiving happens with the sun and the planets.”

The atmosphere in the room was changing. Paul was now in full flight, leaning in and speaking animatedly of the enabling aspect of leadership: “I have noticed that if people are given the chance they self-flower. As a gardener I can’t make a seed germinate but I can give it the right conditions and it is the same with people. In the end you don’t have to work too hard. It is actually there. That’s the ‘being human’ that we have been talking about. That humanity is there. You just have to give it the space, that forum, for it to flower.”

The story above became an organisational artefact which was worked with over the following year. It also became a starting point for the co-creation of our website. The fact that the story lived on in a useful form touches on criteria Coghlan and Brannick set out as good action research: “A good story, rigorous reflection on that story and an extrapolation of usable knowledge or theory from the reflections on the story... What happened? How do you make sense of what happened? And so what” (2014, p.16)?



Figure 15: Culture in the Hands of Global Generation Chef Sally Benson

Linking Practice to Literature

In writing the stories in this chapter, I was very aware of the delicate balance between having good stories for my thesis and doing what was right for the good of those involved with Global Generation. Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains why it is crucial that researchers recognise the power dynamic that is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. Researchers “have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgements, and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or to perpetuate ignorance” (2012, p.178). In this regard Chellie Spiller writes explicitly about the purpose of the Three Baskets.

Across these three orders of reality, the baskets equip humans with the necessary skills and behaviours for living. Importantly, the knowledge in the baskets is of a collective nature and is not solely for individual consumption, but for the greater benefit of society (Spiller 2011, p.128).

On a long phone call with my sister Liz, we spoke of the difference between a controlling and a reciprocal relationship with the land. This in turn raised thoughts about the relationship between people, particularly in the context of leadership and action research.

“There is so much involved in real collaboration, it’s not something I can assume is happening. I have often reported selected headlines on what others are saying to serve my purposes, rather than ask them about what their experience is.” I said to Liz. Her response was blunt and true, “You mean the egocentricity of it?” I had to agree – it is all too easy to have a consumerist relationship to people.

Liz then brought in another element that made my dilemma less personal: “The question is how the individual learns in relation to the greater whole. Maybe Māori Wānanga, traditional schools of learning, might be worth looking into. Our Western model of learning is all about the individual striving forth.”

Joanna Ciulla makes the point that there has been relatively little work on ethics and leadership because of the prevalence amongst leadership researchers of positivist scientific method, which breaks leadership into “smaller and smaller pieces until the main code has been lost all together” (Ciulla 2014, p.7). Ciulla doesn’t suggest what the main code might actually be. Ethics scholar Clifford Christians (2000) points to the earth and the wider cosmos as the ‘main code’. Christians describes how modernism created a split between humans and the natural world as a source of moral grounding. He goes on to say how this

extended into the belief that for science to flourish it needed to be separated from any sense of moral order, whether it came from nature or was imposed by the church or state. The notion of 'values neutrality' was promoted as a way of providing freedom and inclusivity in an increasingly diverse society.

Ako is a holistic approach found in Māori Wānanga (schools of learning) which is grounded in a meaningful relationship with the earth and the wider universe. Ako is based in the principle of reciprocity and recognises that the learner and whānau (extended family) cannot be separated from the whole (NZ Ministry of Education 2008, p.20). The Māori research approach, as described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), is quoted by autoethnographer and qualitative research scholar Norman Denzin as a model of good practice. Ako aims to protect the rights, interests and sensitivities of the human and the more-than-human world.

In specific contexts, for instance, the Maori, specific ethical values and rules are described in cultural terms. These understandings include showing respect for others, listening, sharing, being generous, cautious and humble (Denzin 2014, p.80).

Ladkin writes of action research: "Researchers working within this frame are charged with being sensitive to issues of power, open to the plurality of meanings and interpretations, and able to take into account the emotional, social, spiritual and political dimensions of those with whom they interact" (2007, p.478). This raises the question of how to make room for difference whilst maintaining an ethical orientation. Previously I described how Māori embraced multiple interpretations of history. Common within all of these interpretations is whākapapa; genealogy that connects us to the earth and the wider cosmos (Henare 2001, Wolfgramm 2015). In an address to the United Nations, entitled "Catching the power of the Wind", Thomas Berry (2006) claimed that in tandem with the increased destruction caused by a consuming relationship to the earth there is a growing sense of common origin with the earth. Berry invites us to learn from the diversity that is at the heart of the universe so that we can creatively embrace our differences. This is not possible through imposed ideas but from an inner sense of "the numinous, or awe-inspiring, experiences of ultimate reality" (Berry 2006, p.131), which as I have described can carry one beyond perceived boundaries of separation. In our own ways both Ella and I described how in this boundaryless land we felt a sense of cosmic law guiding us to make ethical choices.

The difficulty of referring to numinous / spiritual reality is that it can sound like a simplistic utopian dream. As in the King Story described in the previous chapter, notions of

connection to an absolute sense of reality can all too easily become the stuff of cultish narrative. How could I address the healthy scepticism associated with reference to a spiritual dimension of life and still stand authentically in my experience? I felt the only way of doing this was to stick with my own experience. However this poses problems. In the Clock Tower Story I weave together the recorded words of my colleagues with my own inner dialogue. Whose voices are privileged? On what basis is it appropriate to include my own inferences? Richardson writes; "Because writing is always value constituting, there are always the problems of authority and authorship" (1990, p.26). Coghlan and Brannick (2014), who write of employing empirical method in the service of robust action research, claim that "It is critical that fact is clearly distinguished from value, that the basic story does not contain the author's inferences or interpretation... or at least not without such inferences or interpretations being explicitly identified" (2014, p.16). Elsewhere they write that insider action research should "combine advocacy with inquiry; to present your own inferences, attributions, opinions and viewpoints as open to testing and questioning." They say this should be presented in a factual and neutral manner as if it were recorded on camera. Contrary to Coghlan and Brannick, I have adopted the spirit of autoethnography and deliberately cultivated an evocative writing style, which is not neutral. I maintain this is acceptable if one understands that one's view is only partial. Richardson casts a helpful light on the ambiguities inherent in representation and where the supposed validity of values neutrality falls short:

What right do we have to speak for others? To write their lives?... But what are the alternatives? To propose the stilling of the sociologist-writer's voice not only rejects the value of sociological insight but implies that somehow facts exist without interpretation (1990, p.27).

In line with the first basket of knowledge and Marsden's (2003) call to unmask oneself, my inferences are about becoming more present to myself and to others in the process, about the values and philosophical underpinnings that I held as important at the time; as such the narrative is partial and open to change. I also feel that including emotion and personal inference grounds the work.

Marshall and Mead indicate the possibility of the first-person inquirer and story maker degenerating into "misplaced heroic individualism" (2005, p.236) and introduce the notion of critical humility as an antidote to this: "The practice of being simultaneously committed and confident about our knowledge and action in the world, while remaining open to discovering that our knowledge is partial and evolving" (Ibid, p.241). To that end I

shared what I had written with those I had named and invited comment. In response to this chapter Silvia wrote:

I love what Marshall and Mead are saying, it's extremely important. For the work you are doing in King's Cross, it could be easy to degenerate into a "misplaced heroic individualism" but I have seen your ability to step back and allow co-leadership and this prevents degeneration – Silvia Pedretti, October 28th, 2014.

In deciding to leave my inferences and allegiance to particular values in the story, I align myself with Richardson's notion of progressive-postmodern writing, which draws on Haraway's descriptions of feminist objectivity. Haraway claims this "allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (1988, p.585):

There is no view from nowhere, the authorless text. There is no view from everywhere except for God. There is only a view from somewhere, an embodied, historically and culturally situated speaker (Richardson 1990, p.27).

Summary

Christians claim that "Communities where moral discourse is nurtured and shared are a radical alternative to the utilitarian individualism of modernity" (2011, p.154). My experience was both individual and collective. In making ethical decisions I was guided by the Three Baskets of Knowledge: responding to an inner moral compass, discussion and sharing my interpretive stories with colleagues and advisors along with consideration of my part within the wider web of human and more-than-human relationships.

In different ways both Ella and I had to dig deep into the first basket of knowledge to navigate our way through a difficult situation. Despite struggling, in the end we found an ethical orientation by experiencing ourselves as part of something 'bigger and older'. This brought us together in deeper ground despite the potential rift between us. Seeing our actions as part of a greater whole helped us overcome the protective instincts of ego. In our Clock Tower meeting several of my colleagues also described how care for something bigger highlighted the need for personal integrity. The second basket of knowledge was an invitation to listen to the rhythms of the nature which provided a language for the Global Generation team to express our values and our overall ethos. For example, we used metaphors drawn from ecological and cosmic processes to understand the codes of behaviour embedded in our work together.

When I first began introducing the third basket of knowledge, the interconnection upon which the universe is built, into Global Generation's workshops I found it difficult to explain in a relevant and meaningful way. Working with the material in this chapter I realised that the third basket of knowledge anchors the ethical orientation for my values. This understanding brings the first, second and third baskets together in one basket and reveals how situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe influenced my values. My core values, relate to honouring what I consider to be the deepest part of myself; an identity that is not separate from an evolving story of the universe. My sense of values is not fixed; it is a dynamic living process that comes from a sense of common origin with the earth. This sense of origin is my Turangawaewae⁴², which provides the gravity needed to make ethical choices. That is why, in eventually making the choice to act in accordance with my values, I felt the winds of the universe behind what I was doing.

⁴² See chapter 5

Chapter 9 – Moving on from the Mechanical

To join the dots from the big bang it's just huge isn't it, I don't think we realise we are part of something bigger, we all are essentially one ... Up until now it has been all about convenience for me but now I want to find a way to give back - Construction Apprentice, Global Generation Pertwood camp 2014.

Identifying Rhythms

In the last chapter, I wrote about a sense of being that shaped values which grew from rhythms that I maintain are older than the land, the sky and the sea. Looking at the orientation of my values was another way of exploring the implications of situating leadership within an evolving story of the universe. I described an experience in which I aligned leadership decisions with deeper values as making myself available to the winds of the universe. Guiding a course through these winds is related to feeling a sense of a moral compass; a weighty rudder that carves a different course from inherited expectations of how to be. It's a gentle but persistent experience of independence from external authority and connection to a greater whole that goes under the skin. And all the while there are other winds that move the blood in my veins. I respond to them all and eventually, rain-drenched, find my way home.

In chapter two I discussed extended epistemology as advocated by Skolimowski, Reason and Heron. William James called for radical empiricism and prophesied that future generations would look back at modern science in amazement at its systematic exclusion of "the only form of thing that we directly encounter – human experience" (as cited by Ford 1993, p.108). This chapter is about recognising deeply-felt presences and the patterning of outward currents as important. It is about feeling my way into the right thing to do, a process in which the creed of me as a separate entity opened out to possibilities as we. It is about listening to intuitions that go deeper than words; hearing a different sound in the silence of the air, feeling gravity in my bones. Bergson (as cited by Griffin, 1993) felt that kinship combined with reflective awareness brings about intuition that enables us to realise our true home. I experience intuition as a drum beat that sounds beneath more superficial thoughts. This chapter is also about impulses that came from mythologies, many of which grew for me on craggy hillsides and the backs of horses; mythologies that begged for resolve. I try through words to express that which came before words; feelings, callings to go this way

and not that, arising from an older, lesser-known part of me. In short, this chapter describes the tensions and openings I have encountered in shifts from a mechanical worldview to a connected, collaborative and arguably more functional mode of experiencing myself and my place in the cosmos.



Figure 16: J.R. with Elder Sister Liz

Shifting Gears

I have described two parallel and sometimes opposing ways of being. One is the opportunist drive of the pioneer and the other is a pull to deeper values of connection and wholeness. I feel attracted to and embedded in both these rhythms. As dynamics within the cosmic story, how or indeed can these seemingly different rhythms work together? How in the grip of conflicting callings, could I determine the right thing to do? I wondered if there was a way I could re-kindle for myself and evoke for you, the reader, the sense of adventure in breaking new ground that perhaps those early settlers felt; the pain of fragmentation of land and also feelings of more restorative rhythms held within land. I began with the question: what was a moment in my life that developed my values?

It was a bright, sunny Wairarapa morning and I was up early. Standing outside and looking at the sun glistening on the rippling blue sea, I saw a small plane fly by. It was low as if it

was about to land. I wanted to follow it. Heading away from the house down the farm track I felt free. No one knew where I was going. I was on a mission to find the plane and the pilot. I ran past the farm buildings, the shearers' quarters, the old tumbledown woolshed and around the point; a cutting in the steep, craggy hillside. I felt my eight-year-old legs could take me anywhere. Heading down to the river flats, I could see black cattle dotted amongst the carex grass and cabbage trees – the heat was now beginning to come into the morning. And there it was... the plane had landed on a straight stretch of the track. Maybe I would be allowed to have a flight; I would ask the pilot. "Not now", he said, "but maybe later you might be allowed to come up with us."

The sense of possibility sped me back to the house. Bursting into the kitchen I told my story. I am surprised my mother never questioned where I'd been or reprimanded me for disappearing for what seemed like several hours. It turned out this was a top dressing plane⁴³ and my father and uncle were due to have a flight in it. There was one extra seat available and my mother had been deliberating over which child would be allowed to go. Later in the day, I was told that I was to be allowed the seat in the plane because I had shown initiative.



Figure 17: J.R. (on picket fence) family holiday circa 1970

⁴³

Small air craft designed to spread superphosphate fertiliser across hill country farms

Looking back, I hardly remember the flight itself, but my mother's decision reinforced a 'go get it' set of values. The notion that one is rewarded for following sparks of interest has coloured the rest of my life. It was also an individualistic 'I am - I can' creed. Sharing and consideration of my brothers and sisters did not slow me in my tracks. I had got there first, so I got what I wanted.

After reading this story my nephew wrote:

I like this story. It reminds me of the creed instilled into us at my secondary school by the older boys. It wasn't as bad as it sounds but it was something like; "nice guys come last". In other words, in order to be successful in life you need to be aggressive and take what you want – to the victor the spoils kind of thing – a scary message and one that needs to be challenged. I reflected on this message a few years ago and realized that while it had led to some success it had not served me well in other areas of my life. - Sean Conway November 23rd, 2014.



Figure 18: Top Dressing Plane

When I was eight I did not know that there was another story to tell about the top dressing plane. New Zealand is a young land forged by volcanic upheavals only a few million years ago. Pushed up out of the sea, bony ribs expose themselves to the sky and the

beating sun. The flesh had barely time to grow before the European musterers⁴⁴ brought flocks of sheep to graze the hillsides.

This is a story of wire fences strung across the rocky escarpments, enclosures for sheep on land that was never meant to be grazed. “How many head per acre can we squeeze in?” “What more can we pump out of the land now stripped of its natural fertilizer?” Airstrips installed for tiny airplanes loaded to the gills of their sleek bodies with bags of superphosphate, a magical substance, mined from Nauru, an island in the South Pacific. “Bird Shit Island,” we used to call it. Farmers calculate how many tons of superphosphate they can stash in their corrugated iron containers and huge lorries snake their way up shingle tracks that have been blasted out of the rock by gelignite. I recognise in myself a kind of brutish attraction to the whole thing, the fresh air, the horses and the Wild-West adventure of it all.

I am riding, galloping... gathering myself together, scared and exhilarated. I am on the big bay, I don't remember his name. Each evening I steel myself, lured by the thrill of adventure. Before I put on the saddle he is gentle and sweet. We breathe into each other's nostrils and I think this time it might be alright. I wear gloves because my hands are blistered from trying to rein the bay in. The long evenings in the New Zealand summer are special; the light makes the long dried grass golden. I am on board and heading out. Once mounted it is never a gentle start. With the slightest encouragement, the bay leaps forward. Ahead of us is the first fence. At least this and the next one are lowered by spars, and we will be over them before I have time to think. The next field is large; the one with the water pump in a small corrugated iron shed and a lone eucalyptus tree. The bay stretches forward and really starts to go. I try to slow him and it is no good, he just pushes forward and so I go too; trusting that if we stick together we will find our way through. We are in open country now, no spars to soften the way, wire fences and if I am lucky a nice solid wooden gate. The gate isn't for opening. It is a safer option for jumping than the wire fence... over we go. Heart racing, I can hear it pounding along with the bay's hooves on the hard ground. The sheep yards appear in the distance. I am with the bay now, daring him to go – turning him around in the largest field of all, the old race course, one circle, another circle, did I have the guts to go? Don't think, just focus and stay with the bay. Find our rhythm, find our pace, I let go. We gallop in long flowing strides towards the sheep yards, that are perfectly spaced to meet our stride – up and over and then up and over and up and over – phew, we did it. Turning around we head back – up and over, up and over. The bay and I are shaking. We both know we have gone beyond our limits. I wonder if we can now go home slowly. The oxbow still has water in it. The carex grass and bulrushes stand tall and pointy. Old logs fallen, no farming here. I find another rhythm inside myself and the bay finds it too.

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Sheep station hands who round up livestock.

We amble, savouring the last rays of the sun; stretching time. We turn and don't head home, but onto the main road and across the bridge of the Ruamahanga River; down the slip road and onto the deep gravel bank. The sound of the stones rubbing against each other slows us down. The river is low and we paddle at the edge. We head over to a sandy bank covered in lupins and I dismount. Sitting down, I hold the reins loosely in my hand. The bay won't pull away now. I let the reins go. He breathes on my neck; somehow he knows ... we all know. The sadness rises in me and I start to cry.

There is pain, deep pain that goes beneath the stories of adventure that my life has been shaped around. Currents start to surface. I barely knew my brother Simon; I was two when he died. A small and curious boy, playing in a river... I never fully heard the story of when he drowned, but the sadness carried through into all of our lives. Years later, maybe when I was eight or nine, I cried and cried; my mother let me. It was about Simon was all that I knew. Now I cry unexpectedly over the story of the land. It hits me in great waves of emotion; I am surprised at how deep it goes. The story of the river runs through it all. I also cry one night for the river; the river that I somehow know is all of life. There is living and dying and the river keeps on flowing, into the sea and then into the sky and then down again. Landing on the hillsides, stripped of trees, the earth doesn't stick to the hills any more. The earth rolls down in rivulets of water, leaving gashes on the steep slopes. Sometimes the wire fences are washed away; erosion is a word that fills the air. The slopes are planted with long regimented lines of pine trees, acres and acres of pine forest start to make their way across the land. The machines come making roads and sawing down logs to be stacked and shipped to Japan, ready to be pulped for cheap building boards.

Now the people are getting desperate; waking up to what has happened. In less than 170 years the land, once an almost deafening orchestra of birdsong⁴⁵, has become silent. No red berries for the tui to feed on. There is the noise of agricultural machinery ripping through the land. There is also a new turning in this story. Large tracts of forest are fenced but this time the enclosure is for another purpose. To bring the birds back to the land. Sitting beside my mother in a darkened theatre, floods of tears rise up in me. The film is showing volunteers across the country; they have come out to help re-introduce the kiwi. Somehow we all know.

⁴⁵

When Captain [Cook](#) arrived in the 1770s he noted that the bird song was deafening (Wilson 2004).



Figure 19: Mustering at Te Awaiti, a coastal sheep station where I spent childhood holidays

Growing a greater We

The pioneer and this slower, more gentle rhythm that connects me to the earth and all of life with in it run deep. The pioneer is characterised by the excitement of 'I am, I can', an older refrain, perhaps in the rocks themselves, is 'we are... and we will'. I think about the challenges I have faced in reconciling these different rhythms in order to grow a collaborative community within Global Generation. Much has changed between us and there is still a tension in finding the balance between the 'I am, I can' and 'we are, we will'. This tension has been reflected in the desire to grow a more participatory action research process between us. Nicole, Silvia and Rachel expressed interest in developing their understanding of action research so they could more visibly encourage the young people we work with to become action researchers themselves.

Questions about when does the 'we' of genuine collaboration really begin arose in the process of establishing a formal action research opportunity for my colleagues. A friend who I will call Sue, who has acted as a critical companion during the doctoral journey, was keen to come and work with us. Initially I jumped at the opportunity as she was an

experienced action researcher and a recent PhD graduate. She also shared a passion for Thomas Berry's ideas about the Universe Story.

As Sue, Nicole and I sit together a possible scenario emerged between us... it seems natural to merge the action research training with our current engaged philosophy sessions. The questions bubble up: Why action research? Why the Universe Story? And within a short space of time we had a potential plan. After the meeting I start to pause. I think where does genuine participation and genuine co-inquiry really begin? Who decides? How far back can we take the co-ness of the inquiry? What about the momentum that has built between all of us, can I just decide without everyone involved? Is it right or helpful to change course so quickly? How can we continue to grow what has developed between us all, like the thread discussions, the free-fall writing and the sitting still? What do we have to offer Sue? How can we bring her into our frame? How do we stay true to who we are and open to learning from others at the same time?

I intuited something was wrong in rushing ahead and finalising a plan and discussed my dilemma with Rod, Nicole, Rachel and Silvia. In the end we decided not to involve Sue as we felt the lead had to be grown from within the existing team. It has been slow work to build trust and I felt protective of this. The incident with Sue, whilst at times confusing, reinforced my sense that I did not want to replace internal practitioner thinking with expert outsider knowledge (Altrichter 1999).

Time revealed that, by not engaging Sue, a space was left open for different members of the team to take a lead. Three months later Nicole began running the engaged philosophy sessions. Her first session was on the cosmological and ecological perspective of Martin Luther King, inspired by the findings of Thomas Berry's student, Drew Dellinger. Our discussion and reading in advance of Nicole's session shed light on the implications for me of situating leadership in an evolving story of the universe. King held a cosmological, ecological worldview, a perspective Dellinger claims was largely missed by King's previous biographers and a perspective I note is missing from the leadership literature, which often cites King as an example of visionary leadership.

Throughout his life King was interested in the grandeur of the cosmos. For him, the universe was a source of awe and spirituality. His religious worldview embraced modern scientific cosmology, while rejecting what he saw as the soulless materialism of modernity. He appreciated the wonders of astronomy, but refuted the meaninglessness of the scientific worldview (Dellinger 2013⁴⁶)

⁴⁶

Drew Dellinger, <http://drewdellinger.org/>.

Linking practice to Literature

Martin Buber describes how we all too easily relate to people and everything around us as objects, and consequently our relationships are reduced to 'I and it'. He suggests 'I and Thou' as an alternative modality of relationship which engenders dialogue:

When I confront a human being as I Thou ... then he is no longer among things nor does he consist of things. And in the same way it applies to the physical environment... It can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate a tree I am drawn into a relationship, and the tree ceases to be an it. The I-it relational modality, on the other hand leads to the objectification of persons and the environment and consequently, to the appearance of evil, ignorance and conflict. Ordinary men and women get dehumanized; animals and physical resources get used and objectified. Here the other is seen through the language and imagery of ideology, history, power relations (Lubling citing Buber 2011, p.8).

Matthew Fox points out that, if we consider the universe a machine, then machine work mirrors the work of the universe: "Moreover, if our bodies and minds are also machines, then to treat them in a machine like manner in our places of work is also altogether appropriate" (1994, p.70). This comes at a significant price as Margaret Wheatley describes:

Trying to be an effective leader in this machine story is especially exhausting. He or she is leading a group of lifeless, empty automatons who are just waiting to be filled with vision and direction. The leader is responsible for providing everything; the organisational mission and values, the organisational structure, the plans, the supervision. The leader must also figure out, through clever use of incentive or coercive means, how to pump energy into this lifeless mass (2007, p.20).

Wheatley describes how the mythology surrounding the machine story permeates even those organizations that are set up to create a new story. She claims that despite noble intentions, activists often come to resent the organizations they are involved with because of the clash of old and new stories. Wheatley's description is a caution. It also explains, for me, at least some of what happened in the King story⁴⁷ where a leader ignored and sometimes punished followers who wanted to follow their own inclinations:

Many non-profits have been established to support social and environmental change and sadly as soon as they embark on the idea of creating an organization old ideas and habits arise. These organizations impose structures and roles, develop elaborate plans, use command and control leadership. Over time, the organization that was created in response to the new story becomes a rigid structure exemplifying, yet again, the old story (2007, p.26).

⁴⁷

See chapter 7

As I described previously, despite more collaborative ideas of leadership, notions of a separate omnipotent God were subtly embedded within me. I projected notions of an all-knowing God into a disempowering model of followership. This meant that for a time my moral compass became the approval of a powerful spiritual leader, which in turn forged unhelpful ideas about what it meant for me to be a leader.

We look to someone to tell us what is right or wrong behaviour, what is right or wrong thought, and in following this pattern our conduct and our thinking become mechanical and our responses automatic (Krishnamurti 2010, p.10).

Instead of dismantling the imposed dynamics of the machine story, Mary Evelyn Tucker offers our indigenous story as an alternative. She writes of a profoundly participatory reality that lies beneath constructed notions of control and ownership: "We humans are not lords of all creation but lives woven into the complex interdependencies of a beautiful, unfolding planetary system" (Tucker 2015, p.27).

Summary

In this chapter I have tried to convey the qualities at play in shifting the underpinning narrative of leadership from the story of a machine to the more collaborative dynamics of an evolving universe. This shift affects the compass through which I make decisions. It affects what I allow myself to feel, to listen to and act upon. In other words it changes how I know what to do. In the story of riding across the land and the account of developing a process of participatory action research with my colleagues I eventually found my way home, into a web of mutuality (King 1967, p.71) which is the potential that lies beneath and beyond the entrapment of the modernist story of separation (Eisenstein 2013). For sure there are other stories that end differently, but these are the ones I chose to tell.

Evocative metaphors of the interwoven nature of our cosmic indigeneity have been inspiring for me and there is personal work to be done. It is the slower, localised process of un-picking the past as it presents itself in the present. I wrote about the fall-out of farming practices in New Zealand because it is a world I am familiar with and have made different choices about. Farming has served as a doorway into a sense of how the rhythms of a mechanistic worldview run within me. Weaving together threads of childhood experience has helped me empathise rather than vilify practices that seem hard to understand through the eyes of a more recently gained ecological sensibility. Earlier I described the need to survive and establish a life away from the harshness of the industrial revolution that my forebears may have experienced. I underwent none of these hardships. My childhood was privileged

and relatively easy. For me there are other impulses at play that keep an old story going. The rush of excitement in opening new ground is exhilarating. Driving forward, be it on horseback or at the helm of a machine that spreads fertiliser⁴⁸ in the name of progress, brings with it an intoxicating sense of power and control that masks deeper layers of sadness. At the end of the day, the last rays of sun and the sound of stones rubbing roused an indigenous and more intuitive part of me.

The working and re-working of personal stories calls me to reflect using the three baskets of knowledge. Through the triplicate lens of self, other and connection I recognise a pattern of impulsive action, pushing, listening and letting go, which I have identified in my practice of leadership. I also want to point out that there are values within the mechanistic worldview, which when applied with the awareness offered in the first basket of knowledge, are helpful and needed. The impulsive 'I am, I can' approach has served me well. Establishing Global Generation pulled on the pioneer spirit in me, which often meant going out on a limb and doing whatever it took to find the financial resources to make it all happen. Relying on this rhythm alone is not sustaining or ultimately satisfying for me and if held too strongly is potentially disempowering for those around me. The second basket of knowledge slowed my pace and I listened to what my colleagues had to say. Our engaged philosophy sessions took a new turn as others began to lead. This was an expression of the third basket of knowledge, the interconnection upon which the universe is built.

It is the end the day as I write this, the sun is going down. It is autumn. A sense of mystery is in the air, as all of life draws inwards. Plants relinquish life and send their energies into the ground. Renewed forces will come around again; in this endless cycle of living, dying and living again.

⁴⁸ Top dressing with superphosphate has led to the eutrophication of rivers, damaging water life

Chapter 10 – A Closer Look at Enchantment

J.R. Journal – September 2nd, 2014

Even though sirens, car alarms and the thrum of traffic provide a constant backdrop, life pushes through the cracks in the concrete. The starlings have found a home in the buddleia and the foxes come out at night. A new park has been installed, which is 'perfect' in its block planting of manicured flowers and leaf shapes; an ecologist's report testifies that few creatures live there. The developers wonder how to get people involved in the park. Meanwhile a few hundred yards away a verge between the road and the concrete has escaped the planner's sword; ragwort, shepherd's purse and poppy.... chamomile, wild carrot and burdock have found their way through.

It's not a Smooth Story

I have described the effects of the artificial sense of beauty and mechanical productivity on places where I spent much of my childhood. In the King's Cross development, huge efforts are made to tame the messy and unpredictable rhythms of nature. In spite of this the wild creeps beneath, and excluded members of the community find their way through cracks in the concrete. This reveals how the enchanted is incapable of being eliminated and illustrates the failure of the modern mind-set as a constructed reality (Curry 2012, Latour 1991).

In New Zealand and other parts of the world, colonialism was fuelled by an Arcadian mythology that promoted the need to tame the presumed savageness of nature. The utopian rhetoric of my forebears and much of what I see around me today has left a strong imprint and colours a conditioned approach to community. Notions of creating a perfectly harmonious Garden of Eden with my colleagues and our participants in our tiny Skip Garden corner of King's Cross linger. The reality, however, is often a messy, uncertain business of balancing the demands of running a learning organization, creating gardens in awkward places, giving opportunities for unskilled students to create buildings out of reclaimed materials and operating a commercial kitchen on a temporary site, along with juggling the needs of a diverse range of personalities. Rather than waiting to achieve a shiny and sanitised version of reality, we have been 'open to the public' from the get go.

This chapter is about shifting the underpinning narratives of certainty and perfection that I have inherited. It describes how I have questioned the idealised and constructed state

of prevailing modernist myths and idealistic counter-myths and learnt to embrace more bumpy, uncertain and 'enchanted' ground. I have ascribed qualities of wonder, reverence and empowerment to the word 'enchantment'. I have also examined the many years I spent influenced by a spiritual teacher who invoked a sense of enchantment amongst his followers. I re-lived experiences of promise, delusion, oppression and dis-empowerment that highlighted the abuse of power within an enchanted world. Stepping back and looking at the whole inquiry, I have been weaving together the past and the present, the macro and the micro, the land, the sky and the concrete and social terrain of King's Cross into a tapestry that includes generative and destructive forces. In the eyes of critics it may be unthinkable, unscholarly or even unseemly to deal with these things together rather than separately (Latour 1991). By considering a large and connected picture, an underlying sense of enchantment comes into view which holds new and hopeful meaning; one which perhaps comes closer to the spiritual and material holism of an indigenous approach. Such an approach re-defines the promise of perfection and the consequent impulse to conquer and control into a greater appreciation of the vividness of the world as it is (Mathews 2003).

Patrick Curry claims "the most important single hallmark of enchantment is *wonder*, as distinct from will" (2012, p.77). He also states that "enchantment doesn't make you want to do anything at all" (Ibid, p.83). Could a wilful, pioneering and individualistic spirit be tempered by the relational sensibilities of indigeneity? Could I find an orientation in which there is room for the creative drive of the pioneer as well as the collaborative possibilities that can come from embracing the uncertainty and imperfection of the world as it is? Or was I trying to have it all, without letting go of anything? In this chapter I draw on images that spoke to me through old stories and in my dreams. I explore whether situating leadership in an evolving story of the universe offers a more inclusive and creative story; one that might help me integrate and draw upon the whole of who I am.

Niceness

J.R. Journal – September 20th, 2014

A dream keeps haunting me. I stand cowering with a group of horses. A big strong brown horse is in front of us. She pounds towards me, and looks directly at me; I am afraid. She charges towards a wire fence that I know won't stop her. She is me – a part of me looking at me. The image stays with me and over breakfast Rod and I discuss what it might mean. I think about my writing and my exploration into indigeneity. I sense that I am opening up a power source beyond what I know and feel familiar with. It is not a nice, controlled sort of power.

When the Queen finally gave birth, it was to twins. The first twin to be born was a golden princess. Unlike the sweetness of her golden sister, the second twin born was Tatterhood; she was red and wild. She arrived in the world riding a goat, with a wooden spoon in her hand, shouting, 'meat, meat, meat!' Everyone was horrified and so was I when I heard the story. Tatterhood was not nice, she was a rogue and a rule-breaker. Over time, the King and Queen and Tatterhood's golden sister came to love her as they understood the role she had to play.⁴⁹

It was Tatterhood who broke the boundaries and opened the ground for new possibilities. In a chapter entitled *Why Leaders Need Not Be Moral Saints*, Terry Price writes of rough, edgy and wicked qualities that we sometimes admire in people. He goes on to describe how leadership is about creation, risk and change and is seldom careful and conservative (2014, p.133). During a form-filling exercise, Global Generation's Head Chef realised that I was the appointed risk assessment officer. Knowing my character he looked at me with some bemusement. "That's right," I said, "my job is to ensure we are taking enough risks." That being said, it is habitual to sugar-coat the dogged determination of my nature. What happens when I stop needing to be nice? Following one's passion is risky and so is committing to a deeper place that is not about the recognition-seeking endeavours of niceness. Our mythological inheritance does not predispose us to embracing the not-so-nice *enchantment* of life as it really is (Carus 1900; Mathews 2003).

We are heirs to the Persian mythology of the great battle between light and dark. The dark has got to be destroyed. Deeply rooted in our tradition is the notion to obliterate evil. If resistance is fundamental to the creativity of the universe, then we must call into question the most obvious value of our industrial society: the delusion that the elimination of resistance is good (Swimme as cited by Bochte 1990, p.22).

Ciulla (2014) links niceness in Western culture to civility, which dates back to the courts of the sixteenth century, where, in order to gain favour, an overt show of politeness and eagerness to please was practiced (2014, p.88). Like the colonialist notion of paradise, niceness is what happens when we cherish one-dimensional images of stability and harmony. Drawing from Philip Rieff (1966), Ciulla goes on to describe how, in Western culture, reality is measured against an individual sense of feeling good. In this climate leaders strive to be liked and often prefer niceness over truth:

⁴⁹

I heard the story of Tatterhood from mythologist/story teller Martin Shaw

Truths that make people feel better and help them adjust and fit in are far more desirable than truths that rock the boat ... Leaders often prefer the 'nice' kind of empowerment to the kind that leads to chaos and loss of control (Rieff as cited by Ciulla 2014, p.88).

A naked sense of enchantment works its way within me; the world is raw. When I formally began this inquiry in 2011, idealised notions lingered of a dream-like state, divorced from the up and down, rough and smooth realities of life. I supposed that nature would bring about a kindness in me and all beings. This now seems like another version of Arcadia imbued with a transcendent God that I hoped would save me from dealing with reality.

Berry (1982) writes of how the Arcadian view of paradise was the foundation for significant counter-cultural, ecological movements such as the flower people of the 60s and many who left the city and returned to the land to pursue organic farming, healthy lifestyles and the potentials of a solar age. In practice this fosters a fellowship which rules some things in and other things out. I don't doubt that through leaving the city behind, young people involved with Global Generation have had transformative experiences that engender connection and care for the whole. However that is only half the picture. An interest in growth and change drew me to the dust, noise and down-to-earthness of a construction site in the heart of the city. Many of the people who work on the site know they have a dirty industry and that it needs to change. The lack of pretence I have encountered is refreshing. That being said, in my own way I too have wanted to live in a paradise world where the hills are smooth and rounded. I wanted life in the intensity of organisational chaos to be *nice*. The savagery, the unpredictability, the unexpected situations like the one involving Stuart and Ella, were obstacles on the way to establishing a utopian organisation. The reality is that growth and learning has occurred through struggle.

Blessed be you, you harsh matter, barren soil, stubborn rock: you who yield only to violence, you who we are forced to work if we would eat (Teilhard de Chardin as cited by King 2000, p.44).

J.R. Journal – November 10th, 2014

You with your rhythms rough and smooth enchant the whole of me

Not so beguiled by a golden pathway in the paradise of my imagination

I am confronted by uninvited opportunity

Discomfort calls on patience and humility

Violence and pain demand deeper engagement

Glimpses of who I might actually be

Letting Go

Tatterhood, the enchanted one, holding her wooden spoon and shouting meat, meat, meat, leans over me; she breathes in my ear. “How much can you let go?” I wonder what lies beyond the constructs of my mind, beyond the masks of who I am supposed to be and what I am supposed to do.

A well of emptiness opens inside me. I stop and notice an uncomfortable edge of uncertainty that rises up to meet me. I feel myself letting go to the darkness of the unknown, trusting that, in its own time, understanding will come in a less mechanical, less made-up, more enchanted way. The inquiry carries a kind of discipline with it. I want to keep the space as empty as I can bear it to be. I hear the words “be still, the forest will not forget you” as an older, more empty sense of wisdom threads itself through.

Rilke invites us to “Know the great void where all things begin” (1989, p.231). Matthew Fox claims that an important aspect of inner work is to develop a practice of emptying, of embracing nothingness out of which authentic work in the world will arise; work that is aligned to the codes of the cosmos. Our work then will become a “source of enchantment” (1994, p.136).

Our work takes on cosmic significance when it is inner work, a work connected to the origins of the universe. Therein lies its dignity; therein lies its power; therein lies its reward (Fox 1994, p.54).

Fox also writes that “the human race cannot afford to flee the darkness and to embrace an Enlightenment that does not include an Endarkenment” (1983, p.139). In a similar vein Macy implores us not to be afraid of the dark. She considers an ability to face the dark a core principal of ethical action ... action which will enable us to play our part in ‘The Great Turning’ (2013, p.5):

This a dark time filled with suffering, as old systems and certainties come apart. Like living cells in a larger body, we feel the trauma of our world. It is natural and even healthy that we do, for it shows we are still vitally linked in the web of life. So don’t be afraid of the grief you may feel, nor of the anger or fear, these responses arise, not from some private pathology, but from the depths of our mutual belonging. Bow to your pain for the world when it makes itself felt, and honour it as testimony to our interconnectedness (Macy 2013, p.7).

Macy brings me back to the fundamental purpose of my inquiry into leadership. Idealism has in many ways served the entrepreneur in me well. However as a result of this inquiry I felt compelled to let more into my view, to make room for discomfort in order that I might be more in touch with the stark reality of life as it is happening; both with my

colleagues and in the wider struggles of life on the planet. A poem I wrote after Martin Shaw told the story of Tatterhood returns to me. In this chapter I use poetry because I find it the best medium for evoking another world that lives within our world; a more enchanted, wild and gritty world.

J.R. Journal – October 20th, 2013

On Dartmoor

Looking at a leaf, I glimpse a different world

I am not who I think I am

I breathe not what I think I breathe

The land under my feet is old

Pretensions lay the falcon's cavern to waste

I know not what I write

The story is not made by me

Drop the flapping skin of the hag

The crude and beguiling mask of vanity

Write no more until there are

Words to speak of sorrows on my brow

The un-tempered quest for what lies within

Please nobody

Do what it is you are to do

Be who it is you are to be

Stand still, the forest will not forget you

Listen to the morepork calling

Inhabiting a Cosmic Story

Rod and I began taking some of the lessons learnt with our colleagues in King's Cross further afield. Each time I was curious about how the invitation to inhabit and tell the Universe Story as one's own story might land. What were the principles that were important to me? Where did I need to let go? What new understanding and ways of expressing the story would emerge?

It is February 2015. We approach the end of a Universe Story workshop for teachers in Portugal. "It would be great to do a thread discussion with everyone" Rod says. However time is running out. I remind him that I haven't yet told the Third Basket of Knowledge. Rod says to the group, perhaps we can do a discussion without telling the Third Basket of Knowledge. A non-

negotiable sense of obligation enters my veins and I speak out strongly, “We can’t tell this story without telling the Third Basket, it is a sacred thing”. The room responds unanimously: “We need to hear the Third Basket.” I tell the group how for many years the story was held by the Tohunga⁵⁰ and I share with them my sense of responsibility to honor the tradition, by being true to the story, which for me doesn’t mean telling it in the same way⁵¹. In fact each time I tell it, the story changes. In Portugal, and perhaps after the interaction with Rod and needing to stand my ground as a custodian of Tāne’s story, I felt a different quality in the story. Rod, who has heard it many times, said he thought something at a deeper level was being transmitted.

“The Third Basket is the most important of the three baskets”, Owl said to Lili, just as the Gods said to Tāne, the guardian of the forest, “when human beings walk the face of the earth if they forget this knowledge they will lose their way”. This time Lili looked into owl’s eyes and she saw herself as she truly was; she saw owl and she saw everything around her. But most importantly, more than the things around her, she recognised something that can be recognised but never held. She understood the interconnection upon which the universe is built. Owl said to Lili, “That is why throughout the generations of people who walk in the forests of Tāne weaving will be a sacred thing to do; it is the weaving of the seen and the unseen.”

“You will always find your way back into the heart of the woven universe if you move to the middle of the basket. It is the empty space, like the empty space in the middle of a nest. That is where I lay my eggs because that is where new life can grow. If you are very still and very quiet you can always find that empty space inside yourself. It is also a space in which to connect in a different and perhaps more meaningful way to the cosmic story which is our collective story.”

After I shared the story Rod said, “I really heard the story this time, the Third Basket ties it all together. I had such a strong idea that I wanted to end the workshop with a discussion, and then I felt the recognition from everyone else that they wanted to hear about the Third Basket. I let go of my idea and focused on the whole. I think this made me appreciate the story more. In

⁵⁰ “The tohunga was a person chosen or appointed by the gods to be their representative and the agent by which they manifested their operations in the natural world by signs of power (tohu mana)” (Marsden 2003, p.14).

⁵¹ This is my adaptation of the Three Baskets Story call to Karakia, the way of oneness

the story it talked about the basket with emptiness in the middle and I felt myself becoming the basket where there was space and emptiness. So I found it a very powerful ending because we can kind of know about ourselves and other people, but we have to be aware of this basket and how in that empty-space everything fits together”.

One of the workshop activities had been to collectively tell the story of the universe. Each person was given an envelope in which they received a small part of the story, an artistic representation made by two of the young people involved with Global Generation. This was an invitation for the Portuguese teachers to dwell within the part of story they had been given and to write about it in the first person. For example I am a spiral galaxy ... I am the meteor that destroys. We then enacted the whole story as a group. The Portuguese organiser of the workshop spoke up: “When we told the story of the universe, each time someone spoke about a part of the story, whether they were bacteria or dinosaurs, it seemed like it was a single voice speaking.”

We had performed an age-old ritual of reciting our history back to the beginning of time. In doing so we had created a spiral of life between us, which revealed more about what it might mean to be indigenous to the Cosmos. Just as birds weave their nests out of different materials, there was something personal about each of us threaded through the story. Two nights later I had a dream which invited me to think more about what the Three Baskets of Knowledge held for me.

In the dream I am the renegade in the king’s empire, then I am in the Skip Garden in King’s Cross and finally I am standing in the New Zealand bush, the dark green forests of Aotearoa. I feel a strong presence on my head. It is uncomfortable; sharp talons hold me tightly. I know I have to stay still and that it is a good thing. A white kiwi steps off from the top of my head to a nearby tree. The kiwi is a flightless bird and yet in the dream it flies to the tree. Endangered birds like the takahē and the huia that have been preserved in museum displays come to life in front of me.

On waking, I felt the dream was a blessing and a calling to continue travelling in the Three Baskets of Knowledge. I also felt the call to let go so the story could be brought to life in fresh ways. Several days later I began thinking about the birds in the dream and how the bush began to sing again. It is now up to us to shape what our future will be and it is not a smooth story; there is no guarantee about whether or not life in its many guises will make it through. For me responding to this challenge has involved both wonder and will.

Linking Practice with Literature

Patrick Curry writes of enchantment as that which gives life its deepest meaning, is most moving, inspiring, renewing and is what one feels has intrinsic value, in and for itself, independent of how useful it might be for some other purpose (2012, p.76). He unequivocally describes a condition/world that is radically non-Cartesian in that it is both material and spiritual, embedded and embodied and he also states that it is fundamentally 'not safe'. He argues that enchantment cannot be understood by the calculating and mechanistic moves of the modern mind because it is un-biddable, un-tameable and as such does not fit with the modernist project; where modernism is present, enchantment is not. Curry stresses that: "enchantment cannot be used, no matter how good the cause; any attempt to do so, (because it is) will driven and instrumental, is already disenchanting" (Ibid, p.79).

"New Age movements claiming to be engaged in actively re-enchanting the world are actually offering only cosier iron cages complete with Fairtrade products" (Curry 2012, p.86).

As I read more of what Curry has to say I question myself. I have wanted to *do* something with enchantment. As I described earlier it was a sense of a 'bigger, deeper, more connected' sense of life that I felt would be a fertile basis for the education of young people. I wanted to bring this to life through action with others.

J.R. Journal – October 12th, 2015

Sitting at my desk I feel as if I have been knocked sideways. This is turning out to be more than a nice little exercise to find a compromise between worldviews. As I make another cup of tea my whole endeavour comes into view; perhaps it is all really driven by the modernist need to control? The title of my thesis says it all: "Enchanting the Mechanical". Despite my talk of multiple narratives, this now sounds like yet another grandiose, 'my way' manifesto. I begin to wonder if I should change the title to Enchantment *and* the Mechanical. Perhaps Kuhn⁵² was right that different worldviews are really incommensurate. I do nothing for several days then I get curious about what Curry is saying to me.

The title of the thesis, 'Enchanting the Mechanical' now seemed like yet another drive to conquer one set of ideas with another. I don't see my work as overturning or replacing mechanistic realities but rather creating spaces within them for what I consider to be a more indigenous sensibility to come through. Instead of trying to make different worldviews

⁵² (1962)

commensurate in what would inevitably be a shoe horning exercise I now experience a larger, loosely coherent weave that has room for multiple perspectives. I am with Mathews in her descriptions of re-inhabiting reality: "To re-inhabit the places in which we live is not to raze the smokestacks and freeways that we might find there but to fit them back into the larger unfolding of land and cosmos" (2005, p.200). For this reason I changed the title of my thesis to 'Enchantment and the Mechanical'.

Certainly an indigenous appreciation of the connectedness of all things clashes with the "grand narrative of progress" (Gergen 1991, p.30) that I was raised on. A guiding myth of Western culture is the encouragement of people to "acquire, improve and expand" (Feinstein et al. 1997, p.9) and I have recognised in myself how this extends beyond the techno-material world into the realms of ideas and spiritual experiences. In previous chapters I have focused on how the notion of progress, which many of us have benefited from, is supported by the Biblical notion that we are above and separate from nature and have a right to control it: "God is separated from nature, and nature is condemned by God. It's right there in Genesis: we are to be the masters of the world" (Campbell and Moyers 1988, p.39).

It is all too easy to slate the individualistic and mechanistic approach of modernity. In finding our way forward from the mess we have created, what are we to do? There is a more nuanced approach than offered by Curry.

The ideal alchemy retains the strengths of both the prevailing myth and the counter-myth while transcending their limitations. Sustainability does not abandon but rather reconciles itself with progress. Connection becomes a post-individual not a pre-individual affair, where rather than losing our hard-earned sense of self, we affirm and transcend it (Feinstein et al. 1998, p.18).

Not all progress in the form of individual instrumentalist action is bad. It is important to consider that "the ability to evolve beyond (our) biological foundations" (McIntosh 2012, p.1) has fostered an autonomous and exploratory sense of identity, brought to us by scientific discovery, which combined with other ways of knowing, has the possibility to "bring us into a new intimacy with the universe" (Berry 1988, p.16). Brian Swimme is a mathematical cosmologist, whose mother is Native American; it perhaps not surprising that he embraces different ways of knowing. Swimme's integration of the mythic and the scientific heals a colonialist insistence on the backwardness of the reality-picture, ways of knowing and beliefs of Indigenous peoples. Swimme points to a way forward that holds the

earth and wider cosmos as sovereign and equally honours the revelations of modern science. In doing so he makes room for more of who we are.

The aim is not to eliminate one way of knowing in favour of another; the aim in an ultimate sense is an integral understanding of the universe grounded in both the scientific empirical detail and in our primordial poetic visions of the cosmos (Swimme 1996, p.77).

With regard to Curry's view that there is no possibility for recognition of enchantment within modernism, I am more hopeful. Krishnamurti described how "you can't invite the wind but you must leave the window open" (2010, p.127). My experience is that if the conditions are right it is possible to let go, at least temporarily, of the limitations of what it might mean to be modern. This enables us to experience the winds of the universe through an older way of knowing, which is enchanting. Imaginative inquiry through indwelling (Polanyi and Prosch 1975) helped me identify with that which came before the colonialist constructs of modernism. Rod and I used participative storytelling to cultivate identification with the cosmos as ourselves. On our trip to Portugal, we involved participants in a story-making process. In doing so, fixed ideas and mechanical modes of being were set aside. This opened an imaginative space for enchantment. These participatory experiences bring to life an objective-subjective reality which aligns with Mathews' description of a participatory relationship with the earth.

Our lives harbour possibilities of poetic manifestation far larger than those defined by the material terms of modern societies. These possibilities derive from our inviting reality to use us as opportunity for new stories, new meanings, meanings that story landscapes, earthscapes, at the same time as they story ourselves. To invite reality to use us as terrain for stories in this way is clearly to make an epistemic shift from "knowledge", in some objectivist sense to *imagination* as our primary epistemic modality" (Mathews 2009, p.4).

As we brought the different parts of the Universe Story to life with our Portuguese participants, the space between us became infused with imaginative and personal meaning that connected the beginning of time to the present, from destruction to new life, which opened windows into a possible future. Our shared experience helped me understand the significance of the spiral in Māori cosmology and the way it aligns with the sense of being and becoming within process philosophy:

The double spiral form is at once an expression of the nature of Being and existence, or genealogical connection from the earth to the cosmos and back, and the vehicle by which our world is sung into being (Stewart-Harawira 2012, p.74).

Mānuka Henare (2003) writes of traditional Māori artists who present the cosmic process as a double spiral. Twelve months previous to our Portugal workshop, Mānuka had explained to me that in traditionally carved doorways one can see how the spirals are not closed. This represents the empty void of Te korekore⁵³ which is the “world of raw elemental energy, pre-creation” (Stewart-Harawira 2012, p.74). Quantum physics has the potential to re-awaken us to a renewed appreciation of emptiness. However in a materialistic world the word ‘emptiness’ often has a negative connotation:

For the modern mind, the vacuum means empty space. It means nothingness. It means naught (Swimme 1996, p.91).

...elementary particles burst out of no-thing-ness, the ultimate realm of generation. Emptiness is permeated with the urgency to leap forth. The difficulty is with language we fail to evoke any sense of awe for the truth of the matter (Swimme 1984, p.148).

Summary

This chapter underlines how meaningful and un-tamed experience is often lost in the mechanistic rationality of modern society because there is “no way of cognitively processing it or grafting it on to the discourse we happen to share in the current historical moment” (Mathews 2009, p.1). The inquiry and subsequent learning this chapter describes became clear for me when I began to think about it through the framework of the Three Baskets of Knowledge. I found meaning in the depth, breadth and woven nature of the Three Baskets. The weave is open enough for that which is felt and perhaps needs to remain un-named, and tight enough to galvanise instrumental and purposeful action. Throughout the inquiry there has been a dance between intentionality and leaving space for new understanding to emerge; between will and wonder; striving to give voice and learning when to hold back. Insight came through more diverse and imaginative means than in any other chapter, which called upon the range of literary devices I have employed. More than once, deeper unexpected connections came in that threshold between dreaming and waking. In finding self and home within a woven universe I didn’t feel a clash between indigenous understanding and modern rationality. As I see it, it is an age-old enactment. As the process philosophers would say, it is the process of being and becoming.

The first Basket of Knowledge reminds me to stop and pay attention to what I am experiencing: to feelings strong and slow, to images on the horizon of my imagination, to the space that lies beneath and between all those things.

⁵³ Marsden, 2003, p.16.

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I am where you will often find me these days; at my desk in front of a computer. I stop typing and start thinking about the double spiral that connects the past to the present and back to the emptiness from which everything came. Everything slows down. I experience myself in a stripped back sort of way. For fear of pinning it down, owning it and sucking the life out of it, I hesitate to call the experience enchanted. In fact enchanted is a word that I very seldom if ever use in my actual practice and it is perhaps better left that way. It is enough to say that it is a way of being in which I am both sure and not so sure, in which I am humbled and filled with a sense of reverence and gratitude.

Enchantment enabled me to welcome not just the smooth but also the bumpy parts of the Global Generation story. The Second Basket invited reflection on what my colleagues had to say about how this affected them.

The most helpful part of your inquiry for me has been going beyond idealisation. For me the Clock Tower has now become the lofty place to be – somehow I have gotten to a place where I feel at peace with being on a roller coaster, rather than seeking an ideal perfect place. I appreciate the bumps. And there is a difference between being OK with bumpy ground as opposed to things not being OK and then doing nothing about it – Rachel Solomon, November 17th, 2014.

I experience my colleagues finding their own way into what I consider it means to be indigenous to the Cosmos. They don't use those words, nor do they perform the storied ritual of imagining our 14 billion year genealogy. The contributions of my colleagues in the following chapter illustrate how it has been important for them to stand in their own shoes and tell their own story. Inviting them to inhabit a sense of cosmic space and time, without needing to name and pin it down as the Universe Story, leaves more room for the imagination and in that way it becomes a more enchanted story.

Contemplating interdependence as revealed in the Third Basket of Knowledge helped me clarify what leadership now meant to me. As described earlier my default position was feeling that I needed to create a 'perfect' organisation and that I was singularly responsible for all that might entail. Identifying with the evolving story of the universe shifted my sense of leadership from the need for certainty to trust in myself as part of a creative and collaborative process. Which could be described as shifting from being a fixed and separate human being to a more fluid human becoming that is in creative dialogue with others and

the rhythms and patterns of the natural world. This shift makes available authority derived from a felt sense of origin with the earth and the wider cosmos. In order to shift inherited notions about leadership it has been important for me to face the fault lines of a colonial heritage. However perhaps the most transformative and decolonising aspect of the inquiry is the discovery of a mythic space in which I have re-imagined myself as a cosmic process.

At times I felt the power of enchantment working beyond my will or what I could have imagined. For example, it was an un-bidden opportunity that brought me closer to the heart of a Māori worldview. Rather than trying to be Māori I felt able to stretch beyond limited notions of what it means to be a Pākehā. Through the support of Chellie Spiller and Mānuka Henare I felt endorsed to identify myself as indigenous to the cosmos. Finally, after months of waiting, a package arrived in the post. It was "Indigenous Spiritualities at Work" (2015), edited by Chellie Spiller and Rachel Wolfram, to which I contributed a chapter called Belonging in the Cosmos. Within the spirit of the book I felt the potency of living in a time when cultural stories are being exchanged and when there is at least in some quarters (despite what mainstream media would have us believe) a growing tolerance and understanding of different worldviews. Just as I am learning to stand in a more indigenous way, others are embracing what I now think of as a mythic-scientific approach. On the cover of the book is a photograph of a spiral galaxy and in a chapter that Chellie and Mānuka Henare co-wrote, Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme are referenced.

As mentioned previously, in line with Armstrong (2009, p.3), who describes how myth carries a universal license to be told in different ways, I have adapted stories to suit the audience. Often this was an attempt to tame traditional stories into nice civilised stories that I felt would be more palatable. The wild cannot be eradicated and it is not nice. I now want to tell stories like Tatterhood, on their own terms, curious about what they might provoke. After I told the Three Baskets of Knowledge in Portugal, I felt that I had permission to tell the story in the traditional form. I give room for Te Korekore, the primordial space that is full of potential, by inviting people to be still and silent. Contrary to my earlier position, I am closer to agreeing with Kuhn's thesis, in that I see and feel that different world views are incompatible. Even so all is not lost. A shift from knowledge to imagination is an invitation to create opportunities for myself and those I work with to let go, at least temporarily, of the limiting constructs of the mechanistic mind. Sitting in the Skip Garden in the middle of the dirt and noise of the King's Cross construction site we return again to the empty space in the middle of the spiral and from this space dialogue within difference seems more possible.

Bumble, carder and hairy legged bees feed on wildflowers recently planted in the midst of the construction. The boundaries of the skip garden leak. An older rhythm is heard across the King's Cross development ... amidst the mechanical a kind of enchantment finds its way through.

Chapter 11 – Expressions of Collaborative Leadership

Every time we are drawn to look up into the night sky and reflect on the awesome beauty of the universe, we are actually the universe reflecting on it itself (Tucker and Swimme 2011, p.175).

Giving Voice to the Cosmos

Brian Swimme speaks of becoming a citizen of the earth; an identity that correlates with my sense of being indigenous to the cosmos. When asked how the world would change when human beings recognised themselves as citizens of the earth, Swimme (2013) stated that there would be a renewed sense of awe and mystery. I agree and I believe there is more in terms of creating the conditions for collaboration that has significance in terms of addressing leadership challenges. In this chapter I describe an engaged philosophy session held between my colleagues and I, in which we reviewed our experience of working with the Universe Story over the previous three years. This was an opportunity to revisit some of the points raised in the discussion I had with Nicole in 2013 about my leadership style as we considered how the work has been led. We also discussed the principles that are important for the cultivation of dialogue between us; silence, self-awareness, connecting in meaningful ways to nature and the wider cosmos, exploring values, merging experience with intellectual understanding and story. I also illustrate, through an account of an interaction between Rachel and me, how collaborative inquiry provided a foundation for discovering a more collaborative form of leadership.

In reviewing the practice accounts in this chapter, I studied contrasting descriptions of dialogue. The first was Megan Reitz's doctoral research, which was based on 12 meetings held by a cooperative inquiry group involving leaders from different sectors. I participated in five of the meetings so I write here from first-hand experience. I also refer to William Isaacs, who has a cosmically-oriented approach influenced by the work of David Bohm, who held what I view as an objective-subjective reality; "each thing has its roots in the totality and falls back into the totality yet it still remains a thing having a certain degree of Independent being" (Bohm as cited by Nichols 2003, p.202). Bohm held many dialogues with Krishnamurti, about the nature of mind and the cosmic dimension of life. Isaacs' descriptions of giving voice to an enfolded and prior unity aligns with the Third Basket of Knowledge, the understanding of the interconnections upon which the universe is built. Isaacs highlights dialogue as an expression of an underlying sea of intelligence that is

enfolded within all things in the cosmos, which Bohm called the implicate order. He maintained that dialogue is the unfolding of this intelligence into the explicate world (Bohm and Peat 1987; Bohm 1980, 1986; Nichols 2003; Isaacs 1999). In this regard dialogue can be seen as a way of giving voice to the cosmos.

Completing this final chapter felt rather like finding the last piece of the Star Wars map that leads to Luke Skywalker. I noticed fear in my body at the possibility of actually putting the pieces together, revealing a map of connectedness that was already there. I felt as if speaking for and from the whole was breaking a code, a Cartesian code of separation and fragmentation.

Many of the words in this chapter come from my colleagues. I include them because this inquiry has been made possible through our collaboration.

Individually and Collectively

It had been a while since our last engaged philosophy session and I felt it. The intensity of our move to the new skip garden had filled up the spaces for us to come together and talk. I mean really talk in the way that makes time stand still, where there is that anchoring recognition that everything is in this moment. This time we nearly cancelled the session; it was only Rod, Rachel, Nicole and me who could make it. With Nicole I had discussed elements of my inquiry over the last four years, and others like Rachel for two and a half years. With Rod our shared interest in the Universe Story began long before the doctoral journey began. Silvia was off for nine months on maternity leave and I felt her absence. I was aware of the changes I had gone through in how I held the Universe Story work, which reflected my approach to leadership as a whole. From it being a utopian narrative based on a single story that I felt needed to be taught, I was now keen to invite inquiry and open to multiple interpretations of what might be discovered. As central characters in Global Generation's work and in this thesis, I particularly wanted to hear what Rachel and Nicole had to say about the journey we have been on together. How did they connect to Universe Story ideas in the early days of our work together, what was important for them now? Three years after her first comments, Nicole was on the point of becoming executive director of Global Generation. I was curious about how we all now felt about the methodology we have used and the way I have guided the work.⁵⁴

Another organization is holding their summer party in the Skip Garden and so we wonder where to meet. The new Park next door, with its mature transplanted trees provides welcome cover. It is hot and I go off to fill my water bottle. As I return, the busyness of the day

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I adopted the title of Founding Director. See chapter 3 for Nicole's initial comment on my leadership.

drops away. In front of me my three companions are sitting in the shade of the trees. They have moved into our regular practice at the start of these sessions – they are silent and they are sitting still. I relax, realizing I don't have to 'lead' on my own as there is already a pattern and a rhythm between us. The words flow easily as I introduce the session, I would like us to take fifteen minutes to draw our personal journey over the last few years with the Universe Story. We all spread out amongst the trees and a quiet focus engulfs us. We come together again and Rachel smiles as I turn on my recorder; she seems ready to tell her story.

I recorded and transcribed what was said and apart from editing down I have not changed the words. Both Rachel and Nicole have read the following account and agreed for it to be part of the thesis. Rachel begins:

Before joining Global Generation in 2013 I believed in the social and environmental causes I was working on but I felt that my spiritual life and my sense of connection to everything was a different part of me, it was in another box. Just before I started the job with GG I came to an engaged philosophy session. I felt a sense of curiosity and intrigue but it all seemed very rational. We were talking about worldviews. It was kind of brainy thinking I was doing and I thought this is nice to be able to talk about this with colleagues but it was all separate and out there. Then in our second engaged philosophy session it felt a lot more about my-self, the 'I' bit. It was that amazing session when we spoke about values. There were also times when I felt a little bit scared, we were doing meditation and we had to do it at home. I suddenly felt like all the different parts of my life were threatened by the things that we were exploring. The stability I felt I had built in my life was being rocked. And work-wise, in terms of how we used elements of the Universe Story with the Generators, I felt under pressure. That was a combination of my own insecurity at being new to the organisation but also feeling like this is the story and there is a certain way you guys tell it and there is a certain way we should be delivering it and Silvia is really good at it but I am not. This made it really challenging. For a long time I didn't know how to do it my way. Then last year we had the staff silent retreat at Pertwood and we had Mary Evelyn Tucker's talk. Even more than the 'Journey of Universe' film or the book it was her talk that made a difference. It validated where I was at this point in my life, someone who said to me it is OK to make the Universe Story my own, to tell it my way, it's OK for people

to take it very differently, for people to challenge it. I then felt I had to be courageous, I had to push through the feeling that there is only one way of doing this. It really happened for me when I took the Generators to Pertwood last year with Silvia and we changed the way we framed the Universe Story. It was very different than what we had done before with you Jane and I felt good about it and Silvia felt good about it. Seeing the young people come into their own was the validation. And now I feel a sense of ownership, for being able to tell the story in my own way, to use it in our work and to think about what is the best way to introduce it to children and young people's lives. I feel like I can, we all can and anyone else can because we are the evolvers in this process. It feels like there is truth and heart behind it now. It doesn't feel forced or pressured. The diversity is actually really good otherwise we will just be doing the monoculture kind of thing – Rachel Solomon, July 2015

I appreciated the honesty of what Rachel said. She had spoken about much of the learning that experimenting and inquiring together over an extended period time has brought. In 2013 Nicole had said that I was 'strict in a good way'. Rachel was now pointing to the benefit of an arguably more relaxed and trusting approach. Nicole followed on, describing other aspects of what we have been through individually and together.

At the beginning there was separation between myself and the Universe Story. I thought that is a story that is out there for certain people to believe in. It was more like a religious story or a scientific story and I didn't associate with either of those, I didn't have a personal connection with it so I didn't engage with the story as such. For me it was more about the practices we have been doing and the kind of experiences young people were getting through sitting still and going on silent walks. I also experienced myself in a different way. I had glimpses of this idea that we are part of something bigger and that this is the Universe Story, which gave me a sense of connection. Going to Pertwood was a really big part of that and connecting to nature and ecology has really been my way in. I get that wow feeling that there is something much bigger than me and I am part of it, it takes me beyond a small sense of myself. It is not just about a nice experience in the trees but actually feeling that deeper connection. It is not just those experiences but also bringing self-reflection into our work, for example in the

engaged philosophy sessions and doing meditation and journaling at home. Merging feeling with understanding has been important. It is not just experiencing it but actually reading up and understanding more how other people have gone into it, like Martin Luther King or even reading your thesis Jane and the different people you have drawn on and understanding the worldviews and the bigger thinking behind our work. It has been important for me to merge understanding with what I was personally experiencing. Also going away on two 'Way of Nature' retreats and doing solos were big turning points; not just in terms of nature but also the wider universe and feeling it more deeply. By then I had read up more about it which really helped as well. Where I think I am at now and perhaps will always be at is how do I keep on developing that for myself and then how do I share that with others. Whether that is on a personal level with my family or our work and actually I see that as being one and the same. So there is not one way, but being deliberate about wanting to continue doing this is important. It doesn't just happen, you have to make the space to enable it to happen and to not get caught up in the day to day too much – Nicole van den Eijnde, July 2015.

By this point all four of us had spoken and a dialogue naturally transpired between us. This is not an authorless text, which means that the excerpts of our dialogue I chose to share come with my inferences. That being said, Nicole, Rachel and Rod have read and testify to the authenticity of the account.

Nicole expressed what I was thinking: “It is interesting because there are parallels in your journey Jane and the journey of everybody who works together with you.”

At this point I felt the responsibility for how my enthusiasm for one way of doing things had squashed expression in others as described by Rachel. I said; “It would be easy to put your feeling of being held back down to being new in the organization and not confident, but there is more to it. At first the way I led the Universe Story work was quite fixed and gave little room for other interpretations”. Nicole and Rachel were generous in their responses.

Rachel said: “It is important we have gone through what we have and unless we take time to look back at it, the learning from it could easily be lost. It is important for all of us to keep evolving, like you were saying Rod to keep refreshing. We all have to find out for ourselves.”

I appreciated having gone the distance with close colleagues who didn't pull back despite the limitations in how I was leading. Their spaciousness and trust gave me the freedom to be

myself, warts and all. With notions of perfect leadership dispelled I felt more accepting for what was inevitably a bumpy process. I said; “There were times when I knew the Universe Story ideas were just not landing. In the early days when we had meditation sessions, Rod and I would try to present the Universe Story to other people and there was this big disconnect, so we dropped it for about a year and just did meditation. But looking back now, it was probably because of the singular way Rod and I were introducing it.”

Nicole then raised a question that perhaps I will never know the answer to, since one can't relive what has happened. Her question touched on the dance between the instrumental action of the pioneer and letting go. “How much was the resistance to do with you or was it that the Universe Story is not a very easy thing to grasp and that it is a constantly evolving thing that we keep approaching in different ways. For example I still don't really know how I work with the Universe Story, like you guys (Rod and Jane) work with it in particular ways, for example doing the deep time walks. I don't feel really comfortable doing a Universe Story walk, I don't understand enough even though I have heard it many times. So my way in is more of an experiential way rather than a telling a story way. On the other hand the Three Baskets of Knowledge is a story I feel really comfortable with and it is good that we can come at that in different ways also”.

Nicole's comment resonated with my growing appreciation of the Three Baskets, in whatever way one might choose to frame them. I ask: “I have noticed that more and more you (Rachel and Nicole) are bringing ‘I, We and the Planet’ into your workshops. I am curious why you are doing this?”

Rachel jumped in: “For me ‘I, We and the Planet’ is an easy way of describing what I am feeling and thinking, the way I relate to the world, rather than cosmology. It is more about me and my place in the world, my connection to everything else and then thinking outwards and considering my contribution. In the jobs I have done before it has been about the contribution and people would be like yeah, yeah, yeah... just doing things without thinking more deeply. I don't always present it as ‘I, We and the Planet’ in sessions, it is more about giving young people that sense of connectedness, whether it be with a bee, a flower or the sun and encouraging them to think about their experience. The main thing is that they have that sense of connection with something bigger than a small and separate sense of themselves.”

I begin to think about how over the previous months I had been influenced by Rachel's approach and I explained: “It felt like a seminal shift for me to let go in my preparation for the workshops I ran for the YMCA. I felt I didn't have to bring the Universe Story in as the big story. Like you Rachel, I wanted to start from the personal, in other words what we know about ourselves and encourage a broadening of perspective from there. And on the other hand maybe

in the early days of the Universe Story work, it needed a very deliberate push in order to introduce a sense of our connection to the cosmos.

Rod, who had been quiet, steps in and asks: “I am wondering if each of us could say two or three things that we feel are most valuable in the work, it doesn’t have to be about the Universe Story. What is important for you?”

Nicole points to reasons why the work has endured: “I think the important thing is that even within that period of pushing, we made time for reflection. We made time to sit still, to let go, to inquire on our own and together so that it could be seen and questioned if we were pushing something and that is one of the ways the work has been able to become our own. So while some of the methodologies feel like they will work for some and not for others there are some things I feel ‘we have to do’ because they are part of who we are as an organization, whoever you are, because it is the way into the organization’s ethos.”

We all laugh and at that point I say, “it is you not me that ends up putting them into job descriptions.”

Again Rod prompts the direction of the conversation: “It strikes me that you really appreciate dialogue Rachel.”

She responds: “Absolutely because it connects to the feeling side of things. If we are creating a space where we are not worrying about logistics, we can actually think about feelings and values and things that matter and that has felt amazing. Last year when we introduced different people for others to think about who we all felt had a cosmological view we created a feeling space, not a thinking space. We connected with someone else’s way of sharing these ideas and we understood on a different level than just what is up here (points to her head).

Nicole followed on: “I think that we are not taking anything as ‘the way’ and that is important but there are core principles in our work. I think there is something in silence however we bring it – whether it is as a group or on your own. And I think connecting with nature is important as well, whether it is simply being in nature or actively planting and I don’t think we would be able to take that out of our work. And coming from a place of values and being able to collectively speak about things that are deeper than the superficial – that is important and it is good to keep on thinking about how we do that. I think stories and the deep time story time line are more like ways into all of the other things.”

At this point I feel I need to let go of my attachment to story. I say: “I guess story is my passion at the moment, but someone else may have a different creative expression. It is not that we are a storytelling organisation, it is just my contribution to the mix – but there are these

principles Nicole spoke of and story is a way of opening them up. They could be opened up in different ways.”

“Yeah I often feel like what is this Universe Story...?” says Rod and everyone laughs.

“Can I say something” says Rachel, “Roshni (our GG intern) said to me yesterday, you tell stories in the best way and I was like “I am not a story teller” and I remember thinking if Jane was to walk in now I could get her to testify, and I was feeling like the storytelling part isn’t my thing and I feel under pressure to make it my thing. But then you (Jane) now stressing it is just a tool or a way in, I felt like “oh yeah I need to keep reminding myself that there isn’t a certain way and it doesn’t necessarily come from you” (points at Jane).

Nicole takes this new groove further: “That is the flip side, on one hand it is ok that I don’t feel like a storyteller and I can do it a different way. But then when I have listened to stories I have thought, oh wow that is a really good way to get across a message that you wouldn’t be able to get through having a discussion – actually wouldn’t it be great if my storytelling became better and I became more confident, and let me do some training. So that is the other side – because you (looks at Rod) really worked on it, and I saw you get better.

In this account I have left in the swings in thinking; for example – I don’t need to be a storyteller but maybe I am and I would like to be. That for me is the strength of the dialogues we have had together. It is not about proving anything, it is a space in which we can try different approaches and practices on for size and over time, we have found out through experience what sticks. Nothing has stuck so hard that it can’t change or be open to question.

What Rachel and Nicole shared corresponded with my insight into the tendency I had to impose my way on others, for example how we should work with the Universe Story or the idea that my colleagues must meditate. As a result of this inquiry I have been less ‘strict’ on how things should be done and consequently Rachel and Nicole have had more room to find their own way. This demonstrates that in the final count practitioners’ thinking (in this case my colleagues) was not replaced with so-called expert knowledge (Altrichter 1999). Nicole and Rachel also described practice that relates to a second quality criterion, in that it contributed to “personal and social transformation according to the inquirers view of an intrinsically worthwhile way of life for human beings” (1996, p.171).

Leaning into the Unknown

When we began the engaged philosophy sessions back in 2012, I wondered what the benefit would be. In these sessions our collaborative inquiry has often developed into dialogue. We have grown the capacity to not jump to conclusions, or push one's own opinions over others but rather to listen for understanding in the collective space between us. Outside of the sessions I experience the benefit of this on leadership, in subtle and significant ways; from a different quality of listening and sharing in our weekly team meetings to building collaborations with other organisations. An occasion that stands out for me was a few weeks after our session in the park described above. It was a time when I recognised that the real leadership, in other words guidance for the way forward, was in the trust between us; in this case between Rachel and me. This helped me embrace an unknown and potentially damaging situation. I was able to suspend my habitual impulse to dominate and control. Slowly, step by step, Rachel and I felt our way into how to respond. Our conversation was not recorded or written up at the time and so the account below is my memory of what happened.

I make my way up the wooden stairs to a small wooden shed that serves as the Skip Garden office. Rachel, who is our Youth Programmes Manager, steps out onto the verandah to speak to me. "Something has happened with the BTEC⁵⁵ course. I've messed up royally; I completely overlooked a compulsory part of the curriculum. I didn't teach it and unless I can find a solution all 20 students will fail the course."

The implications of what she is saying hit me; twenty students who would be looking for places in six form colleges failing. The external examination authority who were in the process of doing a thorough review of all of our paper work are waiting to see the students' course work for the unit Rachel has overlooked. I thought of the secondary school that pays us to deliver the course, which covers part of Rachel's salary; would they cancel the contract? I also thought of Rachel. Forgetting something is the sort of thing I might do, but not Rachel, she is diligent by nature. We both paused; neither of us defending or accusing, we looked at each other, listening and not rushing, making room for the void between us. There was no elegant get out on this one. The thought of covering up the mistake was not an option, I knew that if we were not honest the winds of the universe would not be behind our work, and so did Rachel. It wasn't clear how we should communicate the mistake, with whom, or what the response would be. We did know that we had to be transparent and we had to stick together. I felt if we could handle this in the right

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Vocational training course for 14 and 15 year olds in Business and Sustainability

way it would be valuable learning for us all. Over the hours and days that followed a path opened up in front of us, which required vulnerability and dedication on Rachel's part. She spoke directly to the external examiner and the school and brought in the students over the holidays to complete the required work. What was potentially a hellish situation turned into an opportunity. I saw Rachel become more engaged and more proactive in how we might develop our youth work in future.

I didn't share my account straight away with Rachel. I wanted to wait until she had written her own account, which she wrote and emailed to me six months later.

The last thing I expected was a surprise external verification request to inspect my students' marked work. "Ohhh dear," I thought. "I don't need this right now!" A few days later, I came to the end of the gruelling process, submitting my materials as planned. I felt incredibly relieved, but no sooner had I let out a gigantic sigh of relief than I received a message from the external verifier - she needed more than double what I had supplied! Somewhat dejected, I returned to the task at hand. And then... shock, the last assignment which I had set was not sufficient to meet the unit's criteria. The Year 11 students had already left school. I was stuffed. No way of rectifying the issue and completely horrified that this could happen. I'm normally - some would say obsessively - detail-oriented; how could I possibly have missed this fact?

Dreading how to break the news, I paced and paced for an hour or so. I felt overwhelmed and paralysed. But then I could no longer keep torturing myself; I called Nicole, my line manager but something in me dreaded speaking to Jane - I couldn't face it. I can still feel now the panic in my head as I contemplated how she would react. I felt completely sure it was the end of my role at Global Generation. Being between contracts during a time of austerity, I was sure of it.

Speaking to Nicole was a relief, as she shared my concerns and reacted with what seemed like sympathy. Both of us not knowing how to respond felt "perhaps it would be best to chat it through with Jane."

I explained to Jane what had happened. From my recollection, there was a pause of a few seconds. And then, after quickly clarifying a question of process, I think Jane asked me what I felt the options for next steps were. I

explained the students were out of school. With what I can only describe as a very pragmatic, neutral approach, she asked me if we could find a direct way to bring the students back in to the Skip Garden, by being up front about the situation with the external verifier. Suddenly, I felt energised. Boom! I could do that... absolutely. It was a complete perspective shift... from a dreadful inability to see a workable solution to seeing the entire situation as an opportunity to gain from. With Jane's back and forth with me, I was ready for this exciting challenge. I still reel now at the thought of how sick with worry I was, and then this incredibly positive position to be in - despite the hard work it entailed.

To me, it was a sign of a shift... perhaps in trust? Although from my first response it was obvious that wasn't there... its place taken by fear. I'm still not entirely sure what was behind that - why did I believe with everything I had that Jane would be the type of organisational leader to cut me loose at the first sign of real trouble? What did this say about my professional relationship with her? Was it partly to do with my overall feeling about my place in Global Generation at the time? I think yes. But I am also aware that I, like anyone else, bring much baggage to the picture. Nevertheless, despite the thumping threat of a heart attack that summer, I am glad this happened! Precisely for the reason that it created this unnameable shift between us - since then, I have felt much, much more able to be open and honest with Jane, even when things are a bit... bumpy. Not always. But a lot more!

There has also been a shift for me in my ability to be open with others... it was my first real foray into being trusting of the bumpy ride... of accepting that although things cannot be perfect all the time, they are best worked through in collaboration, with optimism and a dash of courage (for me at least!). Oh, and that I'm only human :) – Rachel Solomon, February 16th, 2016.

The way Rachel and I responded to the challenge of the external examiner's request built confidence in a level of relationship that helped us go beyond conditioned and potentially destructive responses, beneath the patterns of our personal histories into a more connected way of being together. We began to speak more freely and collaborate closely. In order to inquire into the dynamics at play in our relationship we engaged in freefall writing,

at Rachel's request, and dialogue. Through this process I realised that I have sometimes disregarded Rachel's creative contribution and I have also misinterpreted her reluctance to take risks before she is really sure, as a lack of interest. Even more revealing was the way I tried to draw an overly simplistic conclusion about why Rachel feared that I might be an organisational leader who would fire her at the first sign of difficulty. I assumed this was because she is of Eritrean background and had first-hand experience of forced migration. Rachel didn't agree with my conclusion which I wrote while I was away in New Zealand and sent to her. Rather than staying silent, as she might have done in the past, Rachel emailed me back and suggested we find time to speak about it when I returned. This was a catalyst to go through another cycle of action and reflection. I recorded our conversation, crafted our verbatim comments into the following account and shared it with Rachel. She confirmed that that it would be a good way to finish the thesis.

"I am wary of creating a nice neat conclusion, it seems reductive and unhelpful in terms of finding depth," said Rachel.

I respond; "I agree it is not a smooth story. I think coming to the end of my thesis I felt a pressure to name some nice neat conclusions. However I recognise a deeper understanding when I resist the pressure to round things off like that."

I feel the trust that has grown between us as Rachel replies; "I see how I do that too. I name myself and my experience and I wrap things up into an end kind of story. It makes me think about the Universe Story and the way chaos and creativity go along side each other which is different than my utopian vision of what should happen. The nicely wrapped up story goes together with the fixed not moving universe which is stagnating ... trust doesn't grow from there."

Our conversation sheds further light on the limitations of naming and I share this with Rachel, "Naming separates me from my deeper experience and it also creates separation between the two of us. Now in this discussion we are having I am not 'a this' and you are not 'a that' ⁵⁶, we are discovering together."

"Yes when there is that separation I go away on my own and feel stuck, now I feel in a totally different place" says Rachel. She goes on to explain how this shift towards more collaborative and less idealised ways of working is showing up in other ways. "With funders I don't want to give them the nice little wrapped up story. I feel totally comfortable telling them

⁵⁶ Whether that is cultural boxes like ethnicity or organizational categories such as being somebody's 'boss'.

things aren't working. I am letting go which feels counter intuitive but it is working. Work now feels like a really rich part of my life where things are happening."

As Rachel speaks I can see different threads of my inquiry coming together. I share glimpses of what seems like new understanding with her; "In the letting go the whole leadership dynamic changes, one lets go of how things are meant to be and then you open up to the ground beneath the structures and beneath what one often unconsciously does to preserve power hierarchies." I can also feel myself trying to wrap it all up again into a neat conclusion and so I stop. This gives room for Rachel to share an insight which says a lot about what this doctoral journey with my colleagues has made possible.

"At the start with your doctoral research it felt a bit like we were pawns and now I feel so far away from that. Now I feel like a collaborator rather than a prop."

Linking Practice to Literature

In chapter 3, I described dialogue as a fire rising between us and my supervisor commented "Is this not fanciful?" I also critiqued Margaret Wheatley's description of emergence in organisations as being over-idealised and I admit to falling into the same trap in relation to dialogue. It is all too easy to adhere to break-through moments and in doing so one fixes the notion of dialogue into a particular destination to arrive at. Indeed it is this idealisation in the literature on dialogue that Megan Reitz set out to address in her PhD inquiry: "Where are the accounts of how problematic the process through which we sense trust, integrity and authenticity can be" (Reitz 2015, p.17). I have learnt the value of paying attention to difficult and bumpy ground, and it is a delicate balance. The challenge can be that in setting out to see and highlight difficulties one sees problems at the cost of anything else. Indeed as an academic the tendency is to look for problems which might disprove former understanding and differentiate one's own findings over someone else's. My experience of Megan's co-operative inquiry sessions concurs with her description of how difficult it was for real dialogue to occur; "moments of dialogue were fleeting" (Reitz 2015, p.178). Megan writes of issues of busyness, self-image and power and concludes that for contemporary leaders, with full schedules, having a dialogue is extremely difficult.

Nicole spoke of the importance of silence in Global Generation's work. She said "something is in the silence however we bring it". In our engaged philosophy sessions, a practice of sitting still is an important way of listening for the silence that runs beneath and despite a busy mind; that silence is not the ending of noise (Krishnamurti 2010, p.114). Awareness of silence comes through paying attention to the context, to the emptiness out

which everything arises. In this way sitting still creates space for dialogue. Brian Swimme (2013) draws on scientific discovery to describe how everything comes out of nothingness; an understanding which aligns with traditional Māori philosophy. The ground of nothingness can be experienced in sitting still, even amidst the noise of one's own mind. In the Skip Garden, this also means amidst the noises of the construction site. Isaacs writes extensively about silence, offering practices to help build our capacity to really listen: "To listen well, we must attend both to the words and the silence between the words" (1999, p.86). Isaacs describes how practices of silence and stillness can connect us to the implicate order that is enfolded within the physical universe and he maintains this is one of the key principles of dialogue: "To stand still is to come into contact with the wholeness that pervades everything, that is already here; it is to touch the aliveness of the universe" (Ibid, p.102). It was a deeper sense of wholeness that enabled Rachel and I to be curious about rather than separated by our differences.

Nicole spoke of a deeper connection in nature and the wider universe. The value placed on participating with nature has informed the way dialogue has grown within Global Generation. Drawing on the work of David Abram, Isaacs writes of engagement with nature that can shape identity:

In preparing ourselves for dialogue, it is helpful to recall that there was a time when human beings were much more intimately involved in the landscape, where our very language mimicked and was developed from the music of the earth itself. We not only listen to the earth; it listens to us (Isaacs 1999, p.90).

In this quote Isaacs is pointing to an objective-subjective reality in which the cosmos comes alive through participation. One clue to this is the way that in the dialogue with my colleagues, others expressed what I was thinking and a common thread of conversation emerged between us. In moments like this, there is receptivity to an implicate order (Bohm and Peat 1987; Isaacs 1999) which feels like the shared heartbeat within a dialogue. One could say that it is cosmic encounter experienced in a personal and hyper-local way.

Behind the complexity of the explicate, external world is a process of unfoldment that is proceeding everywhere in the same way. I find that as we look for this principle in operation in a dialogue we can for instance see a common thread of conversation emerging through several people at once (Isaacs 1999, p.168).

Earlier I referred to story as the language of the cosmos; it follows then that story is also the language of dialogue. Several months after our dialogue in the park where Nicole and Rachel expressed their reluctance and their attraction to becoming 'storytellers', our engaged philosophy sessions focussed on practicing the art of storytelling. The aim was not

only to encourage the practice of storytelling but to develop our capacity to listen for the story between us. Isaacs (1999) describes how in dialogue we need to listen for and voice the story that is emerging in the collective, which sums up why I consider story an important medium in growing collaboration.

The narrative voice of the storyteller is unlike that of the rational, analytic mind. It does not break things up or categorize. It makes distinctions, but these are always seen as part of a larger weave (Isaacs 1999, p.172).

In chapter one, I wrote about the disappearance of a cosmic context in action research education, despite the fact that embracing our place within a 'given cosmos' informs the participatory foundations of action research. Similarly, dialogue, a common term now in both business and academic circles, is often spoken of and studied in isolation from a cosmic whole. Arguably this is the Cartesian legacy that has encouraged endeavours that are rather like trying to learn about a hand in isolation from the body. I suspect most if not all of the individuals in Megan's co-operative inquiry group held nature and the wider cosmos as meaningful; however, this was not discussed or written about. This may have helped cultivate an atmosphere in which dialogue could grow between us.

Isaacs describes parties occupying extreme positions finding common ground through dialogue e.g. steel company bosses and union representatives. He also shares times of painfully protracted conversation where dialogue hasn't occurred; embodying the fullness of Isaacs' approach means closing the Cartesian divide. Isaacs calls us to go beyond individual psychology so that we can be open to a meaningful relationship with the cosmos and what might arise from that; however, he does not write of the challenge in encouraging others to do that. As with the biographers of Martin Luther King, the cosmic orientation of Isaacs's approach is largely overlooked by his reviewers.

Like the un-biddable nature of enchantment, this chapter reveals how the cosmic sense of our selves has to be discovered in one's own shoes, in one's own time. Brian Swimme (1996) describes how it takes sustained contemplation of the ways of the universe, and this includes special attention to the knowledge we have gained over the last 400 years.

Deep truths challenge us profoundly. To understand them demands a change in ourselves along with a creative leap of the imagination (Swimme 1996, p.6).

'I, We and the Planet' and The Three Baskets of Knowledge have offered pathways to contemplate the rhythms and patterns of the universe, for participants who would not sign up for a study of our 'cosmic selves'. Rachel spoke of the separation, prior to joining

Global Generation, between a spiritual sense of connection to everything and what she did in her professional life, despite the fact that she was working for environmental and social change organisations. Nicole spoke of 'I, We and The Planet' as being an essential principle within Global Generation. Rachel claimed that 'I, We and the Planet' was a way of describing how she was feeling and thinking and how she related to the world. I equate 'I, We and the Planet' with the importance ancient Greeks placed on the integration of beauty, justice and truth, which lose their meaning if one is held in isolation from the other two.⁵⁷

... the pursuit of objective understanding, the subjective experience of beauty, and the shared activity of coordinated and just action. They called these three the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. The True evolved into the pursuit of objective scientific truth, the Beautiful into aesthetics and art, and the Good into ethics and the challenges of collective action (Isaacs 1999, p.13).

Summary

Rachel described how a big learning has been that our work together is not a monoculture story; we have all needed to find our own way. Neither Rachel nor Nicole felt confident to specifically introduce the evolving aspect of the Universe Story into their workshops with young people, but certainly the sense of embracing interdependence, chaos and creativity that comes from identifying with nature and the universe as ourselves, had an impact on them and how our work has developed. I have learnt from and responded to difference and opposition between us and within myself. At the beginning of the doctoral journey I grappled with conflicting forces inside me experiencing them as incommensurate; the opportunistic drive of the pioneer and the pull towards meaningful connection with the whole. Isaacs has defined leadership as "the capacity to hold the container for gradually larger sets of ideas, pressures, and people as the different crisis points unfold" (1999, p.255). Rather than finding a way for different worldviews to be commensurate, with the help of my colleagues I developed more capacity to hold multiple perspectives. In order to create a container that could accommodate difference with others I first needed to create an inner container in which to face and accommodate difference inside myself. As we sat in the park, I experienced us taking up the four roles to support dialogue expressed in Kantor's Four Player Model (as cited by Isaacs 1999). I initiated, Nicole and Rachel followed and opposed and Rod acted as a bystander who made timely interventions which analysed and drew out more of the dialogue. This is a microcosm of a wider leadership experience. An experience in which I have initiated and I have also followed and opposed. Writing this

⁵⁷ Correlation between 'I, We and The Planet' and 'Beauty, Justice and Truth' invites further research.

thesis has afforded me the opportunity to stand back and make a wider commentary on what is occurring. I want to point out that in reviewing many of the practice accounts that I have included in the thesis, I noticed a repeated pattern of Rod playing the bystander role. This slowed me down and helped me see things in other ways. This is one of the ways Rod has contributed to growing a more collaborative Global Generation community.

In the last three hundred years humanity has learnt an incredible amount about the universe. Thanks to Copernicus, Descartes and all who followed in their wake, we have learnt and sought certainty in a known universe by separating things out. While useful, this is an artificial position. We can't really separate ourselves out; we are an integral part of a largely unknown universe. Even though this is the oldest and closest part of my experience, standing and speaking from the experience of self as an evolving, interconnected and creative process still feels like a big deal. It is the breaking of the Cartesian code. There is an earlier cosmic code (Berry 1988; Christians 2000) that has implications for situating leadership in an evolving story of the universe. In the last chapter I described how I learnt to embrace the bumpiness and uncertainty of leadership through trusting in the creative and collaborative process of evolution. What stands out for me in the practice accounts I have shared in this chapter is the confidence and curiosity to inquire that comes from cosmic indigeneity, however named or not named. I describe how having the space to connect with the universe story in our own way and as our own story provided the ground for deep listening and the cultivation of dialogue between my colleagues and I. In this light, one could say that whatever way it was experienced; in silence, through spending time in nature, through an astronaut's view of the earth from space, cosmic indigeneity, supported collaborative inquiry, which in turn developed collaborative leadership. Our inquiry and emerging sense of leadership was both informed by immensity and grounded in the day to day reality of our work together. Holding the personal within a very cosmic story provided a context for exploration, learning and development which meant that the potentially difficult conversations between Rachel and me left us both feeling uplifted.

Conclusion

Thanks to Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry (1992), I began to view the universe not as a place but a story. Brian Swimme (1984) described the universe as a green dragon. Nearly thirty years later he explained that his intention was to reinforce the point that life is not confined to individual human beings; life is a wild and untameable principle of the universe (Swimme 2013). The pages of this thesis have been a telling a green dragon kind of story; one that can't be grasped through the words alone. One of the lessons in this story has been the importance of standing in my own shoes and making room for difference. While it may not work for some of my colleagues, I still find potency in the telling of an evolutionary origin story and I proceed that way, albeit with a greater appreciation of the mythic potential of the story then when I began.⁵⁸

The rocks in my childhood playground spoke to me; earth is mother they said. Looking further back, early murmurings in the depths of the ocean signaled something was coming alive, not by the movement of the wind and the seas but through its own accord. The conditions were just right for the universe to create a new part of our story ... bacteria, then sea creatures emblazoned with the spiral pattern of the Milky Way, fish of different shapes and sizes whose fins became feet as they found their way on land. These epic leaps eventually brought into our story the lives of great dragons whose demise enabled the flourishing of tiny mammals; our early ancestors. Looking for the patterns in the sun and the soil we learnt clues about life in capsules that contained the smallest of seeds. Growing crops that covered the land we celebrated and then marched to rhythms that made small things turn out big. Moving off land and across wild and fearsome seas we conquered and shaped new lands and our desire for bigger and better grew. We created cities that shone so brightly we could see the stars no more. Now the land is becoming sad and quiet. Might we once more listen to the secrets of the stones, the soil and the stars?

In my very immediate story, it was land that whispered in my ear. I listened to rhythms that lie within and beneath fault lines of the past. I learnt to respond to a different story. Beneath manicured lawns, within the silence of rocks and the harshness of stones I found family and home. I traced the separation of mind and a meaningful sense of land and

⁵⁸ One of the consequences of the research that has informed this thesis is that Rod and I wrote and began to tell the 14 Billion Year Journey of the Universe as the story of a fiery Dragon called Davida. It is a story that is still in the making.

cosmos. I walked in the shoes of my forbears who travelled across seas to a way of life that treated land as a neutral substrate for owning, fencing and farming. Now I stand in the middle of a new part of London where the developers also impose designs on land. Their master plans dictate the rise of glass and steel buildings and parks perfect in their block planting. It is not just their story. I have witnessed the ways this world is enfolded within me, particularly in terms of the drive to tame the diversity of life into a single story. I attempted to turn the untameable turnings of an ongoing experiential event into a neatly named Universe Story. And all along there was another more enchanted world enfolded within the mechanical world.

The geography for many of the stories in this thesis has been the Skip Garden. It is now a different place and in many ways we are a different organisation then we were at the start of this inquiry. The journey we have made offers learning for leadership of sustainability projects that goes beyond the certainty of individual and colonial-style control to the uncertainty and creativity of collaboration. The Skip Garden has emerged through artful engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders. The incantation of an older, less controlled rhythm is not only between my colleagues and me, but also with the businesses with whom we collaborate. It is not an enchantment of the mechanical, an 'us over them', charity group over the developers or vice-versa. We have all shaped and are being shaped by revealing a more coherent story that is growing between us. It is a hyper-local story which draws upon and adds to a larger weave. In this way the Skip Garden didn't and could never have happened through a master-planning process. It is often referred to as a garden of a thousand hands, hands which have crafted an unconventional assemblage of plants and structures for such a commercial part of London; structures which needed to meet the requirements of planning permission and building regulations. As I spoke with lawyers, architects and educational establishments to draw up complex legal agreements, I witnessed belief in a lesser-known and more enchanted world that lies within the mechanical world. Consequently the agreements were cleverly couched in phrases such as 'with reasonable endeavour'. I call that being multi-lingual.

So what is the relationship of land and leadership, that potent juxtaposition of words that haunted me at the start of this inquiry? My story is a microcosm of a larger cultural story. The way we have treated land indicates the way we have suppressed and lost the appreciation for a more spontaneous reality. This is a reality that perhaps never should be named. It is this untameable reality that drew me into cosmic indigeneity which I offer as a contemporary form of indigeneity.

I have seen how deeply conditioned I am by the currents of colonialism and there are other significant social constructs that have shaped who I am, particularly issues of gender which invites further research. I don't think it is ever possible to completely stand, beyond fleeting moments, in a non-constructed context. It is a good aspiration nonetheless, in that glimpses of a deeper, evolving and connected sense of reality can bring about the kind of trust needed to embrace less certainty. Deeper inklings invite listening and letting go. In this way collaborative inquiry has grown and informed possibilities for collaborative leadership. A mode of being that neither dominates nor gives way. It is the seeking of order between extreme positions so that vision arises not in the mind of one individual but is rather a sensed thing that emerges in the space between individuals. I am writing of an objective-subjective reality and it would be inaccurate and unhelpful to say that everyone I am involved with sees this the same way. Each of us has seen what we need to see. Rather than specifics it is more often a sense of rightness, of commonality, that gives confidence to proceed.

While I offer the stories in this thesis in the hope that they will be of help to others I am loath to name too strongly or be too prescriptive about principles lest they become rigid and reductive. Working with the Three Baskets of Knowledge helped me value broader ways of knowing which enabled the weaving together of visible and invisible dimensions of life into a cosmic sense of identity. Working within the Three Baskets of Knowledge or, said otherwise, in an 'I, We and the Planet' sort of way, I have found invitations for silence and stillness and I have drawn meaning and values from the soil under my feet, the stars above my head and many things in between. Thanks to the invitation of autoethnography I felt free to imagine, inhabit and tell of movements within a macro and a micro story in ways that often escaped the dominant system of knowledge. The story changed me and I changed the story. This helped me understand the past and envision the future differently. Again and again, I asked what is the significance of my cultural and my deep time story, what am I doing and why, how do I experience myself in the mundane and the massive, in challenges of organisational life and as a unique expression of life's great unfolding.

I have learnt that the underpinning narrative of leadership within a mechanistic mind set is deeply ingrained and not simply dismantled. Similarly, collaborative leadership is not a shiny new story with which to conquer that which seems to be well past its use-by date. Imposition never really works; a next step is ungraspable. However, invitations for dialogue are possible and offer doorways into collaborative leadership. I have illustrated through ecological, cosmic and day-to-day human stories the conditions out of which dialogue has

developed. Through this ongoing experiment within Global Generation, I have opened my sensitivities to the ferment of all that I am and all that I have ever been. Whilst the future seems more uncertain than ever I look forward with the knowledge that more functional and more collaborative modes of leadership can develop through taking the time to find meaning and direction in the rhythms and patterns of the indigenous cosmic ground we are all already standing on.

Post Script

Sitting in the front of a big white van on my way down to Global Generation's campsite at Pertwood, I am looking forward to a weekend outdoors with plenty of physical activity, no books or computers. Fantasies of a post-doctoral future with hands in the soil pass through my mind. As we wrestle our way out of London and finally feed into the start of the M4 and all points South West the phone goes. It is a call I have been waiting for. Steve my supervisor is ringing with the feedback from my two examiners – a warm up conversation (I think), before my planned viva a few days later.

That was back in May 2015 and it turned out to be a year and a half before I finally completed; much longer than I expected. I decided to write this post script because what happened was not what I would have planned or hoped for. It was an unexpected turn of events that offered the richest blessing of the whole of the doctoral journey; it speaks to the heart of this inquiry.

The traditional, organic sense of time, with its ties to the cycles of nature, was abandoned at the beginning of the modern era. In its place modern humans invented mechanical time. When they enshrined the clock in the city's towers, they disconnected themselves even further from the rhythms of life (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.107).

For me the sometimes painful unpredictability of the doctoral process highlights the need to re-connect to a different sort of time; organic time. Through embracing this non-mechanical sense of time I discovered the depth required to bring my inquiry to fruition. To convey a sense of this I would like to return to what happened in that big white van.

I can feel myself take a sharp inhale before picking up the phone.

Well Steve says, “I have some good news and some not such good news, what do you want to hear first?” I opt for the good news.

“The examiners like the way you write, they can see you have done tons of work, and they think the Skip Garden project is really exciting and your inquiry *could* make a real contribution to the field of leadership” he says.

That sounds good I think and begin to relax ... “but” Steve continues; “they want to postpone the viva and have made a lot of recommendations about how you need to re-work the thesis to meet the academic standard required for a doctorate. It needs more rigour in how you link to the literature, how you stay focused on and work with your inquiry and how your practice has changed because of it ... I am sorry to be bringing you such bad news.” I felt he was as disappointed as me, we both thought I was ready, at least ready to have a face-to-face conversation with the examiners.

As the tears rolled down my cheeks and I tried to absorb the immensity of what he was saying, I noticed how much I wanted to hear that the examiners thought the inquiry was worthwhile and there was potential for it to develop into a real contribution and at the same time I wondered if I had it in me to go deeper. I was also glad to be having the conversation while I was sitting next to Rod. I think it would have been hard to describe to him afterwards and I would need his support and understanding. Steve and I agreed to speak a few days later in order to make a road map for the work I would need to do.

I was relieved to have the weekend outdoors. It was an enforced break as there was no electricity and very little phone coverage. By the time I spoke again with Steve, I had shifted time frames. No longer expecting an easy way out, I contemplated the eons of time it took for dust to form into rocks, bacteria and eukaryote cells. Why should my thesis be any different: it will take the time it takes. We have always said in Global Generation, we can cultivate the soil and plant the seeds but we can never determine how and when they will grow. Now was a time I needed to take a big dose of my own medicine.

Over the following days I also felt challenged by one of my own quality criteria in terms of action research, that of resisting outside expert knowledge. In the intensity and insecurity of the situation I began to doubt. Did I need an additional supervisor? Perhaps I hadn’t had the right kind of guidance? Did I need to do a more formal literature review? Was my work too unconventional in academic terms? Over the weeks and months that went by, thanks to the guidance of my supervisor, I settled on the need to trust myself more. This was an invitation to go deeper into what I knew, to have the courage to follow my own inklings and to be prepared to stand with the answers to my questions.

What the white van story meant in reality, was more than a few tweaks to get my thesis ready for a viva. Over the next 18 months I let go of, re-wrote and re-wove the work. I put down the inquiry for three months and studied other people's work. This brought me into contact with Kendall Smith Sullivan's animated expressions of autoethnography. I was inspired by her and as I learnt the craft of locating my own contribution within the wider field of literature, I gained confidence in my own root. I offer this root as a cosmic sense of identity which I call cosmic indigeneity. A sense of self, which expands on the psychological sense of self that defines most autoethnographic accounts. Donna Ladkin, my external examiner, had suggested there was more opportunity than I had explored, to link the back stories to the front stories of my day-to-day practice. This included the shadows of colonialism and Berry and Swimme's Universe Story ideas. It was guidance that I was more than ready to receive. Up until that point I had been tentative about sharing the very thing that I was so passionate about; often feeling that the scale of my inquiry was too ambitious. I now felt I had permission to make leaps between time periods, paradigms and identities. It became more natural to link and compare my current practice within Global Generation to the values expressed in the back stories of my cultural heritage and to the undulating rhythms and patterns of the cosmos. This in turn mitigated my fears that my very personal stories would come across as an indulgent family history. I now saw these stories and the wider body of scholarship as cultural artefacts. In marrying the micro detail of life within the Skip Garden to the macro movements of culture and the wider cosmos I was able to articulate my own interpretation of autoethnography. I explored this with my colleagues and Silvia and I came up with a definition which has become a signature phrase in our practice; "rooted in reality and informed by immensities."

I owe thanks to my friend Kent Williams for an opportunity that deepened my personal journey within the journey of the universe. A week after the experience in the white van I joined a group of twelve others, including Rod, who were all involved in some form of leadership. We were embarking on a ten-day retreat. This was to include a seven-day 'nature solo' based on the Native American tradition of vision quests. The programme, organised by Kent, was part of his PhD research, which focused on the benefits of nature experiences on leadership. When I signed up I had fantasies of a sojourn on a tropical island; however, this was not to be.

After several hours the bus we had taken from the airport stops and we are tipped outside beside a jetty in a tiny fishing settlement. The wind is howling and rain looks imminent. Grabbing waterproof gear out of my pack I clamber into a tightly packed zodiac dinghy with two

huge outboard motors. As we bounce up and down on the waves of the wild and choppy sea that lies between mainland Canada and a tiny island in Nova Scotia, I look down at my damp sneakers and have that sinking feeling of being ill-equipped for what is to come. A few days later we head off to our own solo spots, where we will be alone; completely alone for the next seven days. This is getting frighteningly real. I say goodbye to Kent and as he walks away instinctively I spread my hands out on a huge granite rock. To my surprise it seems to speak back to me. I feel the energy of the rock enter my hands. I know that I am not alone. This landscape is harsh, the birds seem disappointingly few and it looks like many of the trees are dying. With little else to focus on I am drawn into a bigger sense of life, a sense of the earth itself breathing. During the solo I am accompanied by the ripples on the sea and the gathering of storm clouds overhead. I feel these age-old movements of the earth as my breath and my blood. I crouch in my tent, grateful for my new expensive sleeping bag as the temperatures plummet to five degrees and below. I meditate and I read the one book I have brought with me; "The Journey of the Universe".

Unlike the tropical island I had hoped for, during the solo I felt as if I was in the fiery cauldron that shaped the early stages of the earth ... "elements moved freely and quickly between solid liquid and gaseous states" (Swimme and Tucker 2011, p.44) as volcanoes spewed out molten lava and steam that formed the rivers and the seas. The whole experience, the isolation, the turbulent weather that brought us in on a rescue mission two days early brought me into an eye in the middle of the storm. This was the pulsing heart of the universe which I experienced as my own heart.

I didn't write the above account until after I finally had my viva but I carried it with me. I have decided to include it here as it sums up what I heard myself saying in the viva about my study of leadership; I experienced silence and stillness, fear and intensity, unexpected openings, single-minded determination and I learnt to collaborate, in this case with the elements. I now move more willingly and more curiously between all those states. For example, I am currently involved in a new piece of work with Global Generation on a big development site in South East London. I feel in myself the singular starter energy of the pioneer. And I am grateful to be working in a collaborative context. It was Nicole's wariness about my singular drive that reminded me of the fall-out in terms of disempowerment of colleagues and limits to collective creativity in lingering too long in that state.

For most of the doctoral inquiry I felt my research was about shifting the underpinning narrative of leadership. Now at the end of the journey I notice I am describing it differently. I now say it is about shifting and integrating different narratives of leadership. It is not about making different paradigms commensurate. For me it has been about

learning to stand in a story that is big enough for different ways of making meaning, a story that includes all of the paradigms and all of the history that has produced them. It is about learning from and flowing forward with all that I am in the service of all that lies ahead.

Skolimowski (1994) claims that participatory research is a method that aligns with an evolving cosmos. By the end of the doctoral process I felt confident in the claim that embracing the ancient and emerging story of our evolving universe provided me with a pathway that married the more singular approach of autoethnography with the participatory process of action research. The way I worked with the integration of 'me' and 'we' took time to develop. For longer than I care to remember I struggled to define what my inquiry method was and how I was doing it. I was confused about the relationship between autoethnography and action research. The comments I received from others about my writing indicated that there was a lot I needed to understand before I could make these relatively young research disciplines my own: "The study comes across as random musings rather than pinning itself down into a rigorous coherent narrative that responds directly to its stated inquiry" ... "The reader is offered hints and fragments which do not deliver." I now maintain that it had to be this way. The messiness of my inquiry process enabled hidden stories to surface that led me into other stories which over time revealed unexpected patterns and connections. For example, I didn't know in advance that I would be writing about the fault lines of colonialism in New Zealand; nor did I imagine I would be guided by a traditional Māori legend. Working with the three baskets in that legend helped me to experience myself as an integral part of a bigger story in which I found coherence between different meaning systems that have coloured my life; Catholicism, Eastern spiritual teachings, the revelations of current scientific discovery and the relational ontology of Māori cosmology. In this regard I would say that rigour in autoethnography requires both letting go and an intention born of inquiry questions held over time. Quality comes in the cross weave between the micro and macro.

I heard the first basket of knowledge as a call to question the inherited notions of self that shaped inherited notions of leadership. This opened up an inquiry that took me beyond a psychological and often separate definition of identity into an experiential understanding of cosmic indigeneity. This is an identity in which it was natural to honour the second basket of knowledge by hearing what my colleagues and the land had to say. My story was not only my story. In practice this meant that the stories I wrote were read and responded to by my colleagues and my family. The back and forth process provided opportunities for collaborative inquiry, which revealed the significance of the third basket. Io

the parentless god of god's, said to Tāne; "If people forget this basket they will lose their way." Despite our differences we felt our interconnection and this enabled trust, dialogue and understanding to grow between us. It is because of these experiences that I say the practice of collaborative inquiry and collaborative leadership are closely and inextricably linked within these three baskets of knowledge.

Looking back at the whole body of this thesis, I can now see that an autoethnographic root based in a cosmic sense of identity naturally flows into second person inquiry practices of action research. I offer this contribution to scholarship as an invitation to other autoethnographers to inquire beyond perceived boundaries of individual identity. The separation of self is a hallmark of this current historical moment. For example, the notion of empowering the individual self is promoted in much of the literature on authentic leadership (Ladkin and Spiller 2013, p.2). I hope my work generates questions about the limitations of a fragmented approach, so that together we can walk on fertile ground that integrates and helps address social and environmental challenges of our times.⁵⁹ In the spirit of 'I, We and the Planet' I also hope my work re-kindles the cosmic roots of action research as a participatory way of being that brings about worthwhile action in the world.

I am deeply grateful to my examiners for insisting I took more time to complete the thesis. When I finally reached the viva I was ready to go and our conversation was a testament to what I believe a living and evolving inquiry is about. I share the following account written on the day not as some kind of victory narrative, but in the hope that it will encourage others who are faced with the inevitable disappointments and challenges of the academic journey. Perhaps because of my cultural background I am as competitive as anybody. It was a blow to my pride to be told to re-write my thesis. And it was a gift to have to overcome pride so that I could move beyond the imposed expectations of mechanical time into a more organic and collaborative way of being.

J.R. Journal – Viva Day, 13th September 2016

I lay in bed on waking, and as I had done over the last few days I began to go over what I wanted to say to the examiners in my viva. Today was the day. But I found myself thinking about the dream I had just had. I was part of a performance of giant mythical creatures on stilts, dragons

⁵⁹ In his 2015 Encyclical on the Environment, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis uses the term 'Integral Ecology', to describe an approach that brings together issues of social justice and the environment. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

and the like. It was the kind of performance I was involved in during my early 20s. I felt the panic rising ... again and again different endings were happening and none of them were going to plan. Suddenly I realised that whatever way the performance was going it was still working and when I woke I knew that the conversation with the examiners would be alright.

Arriving at Ashridge I was drawn outside to the huge trees that had been sentinels over the last five plus years. The lawn was wet and I watched my smart shoes becoming damp and covered in grass. I realised I needed to take them off. The feeling of the soft wet grass between my toes was delicious and all the anxiety about the viva disappeared. I felt my cells open to the ground under my feet and the story of all that brought me to be here. I imagined what it might be like in the moment before death as glimpses of pivotal turnings on the doctoral journey flashed before my eyes. The trees that had held me came out to meet me, they invited me in and I walked on and felt the moss that marked the junction between earth and air. As I approached the main house the grass became cropped and uniform but even so the signature of the cosmos was everywhere in the hundreds of tiny spiders' webs that glistened with the morning dew. In the distance I saw a tall figure; it was Steve my supervisor who came out to meet me. I felt myself smiling ... beaming in fact. Barely able to contain my excitement, this was the morning I had been waiting for and now I was ready. There was space, relaxation and letting go. Enough room to ask Steve about his summer. He told me about a sailing trip with his son and long hot days painting his house. I knew that there was nothing more I needed to do. I was standing on solid ground; in my Turangawaewae.⁶⁰

What a wonderful conversation the viva turned out to be. I felt like I was flying in a really comfortable pilot seat with two great co-pilots who helped me see and appreciate the territory I had covered - sparkling light, green fields, even snow-capped mountains stretched out below us. I trusted Donna and Matt, the two examiners, and I trusted myself and our shared intent. It was liberating to be in an esteemed academic context and to share the whole of myself, deeper inklings, experiences and aspirations; all boundaries were down.

I wrote the last paragraph of this free fall account in the twenty minutes after the viva before the examiners called me back into the room for their final conclusion. Of course I wondered if I was being too positive but it was true it couldn't have been better. I do recall some turbulence when my mind went blank. "How do you do autoethnography with rigour?" Donna asked. This became an opportunity to dig deeper. Dialogue really happened; a fire of excitement bounced between us.

⁶⁰

See chapter 5

Then suddenly it was time to finish. I stepped out, got myself a coffee, found a comfortable sofa and began journaling about the experience I had just had. I hadn't even finished the coffee when I looked up and saw for the second time that morning the tall figure of Steve my supervisor coming towards me; "they are ready for you to go back in" he says. Heart beating rapidly, I made my way down the long paneled corridor that leads to the chairman's sitting room where the viva had been held. As I open the door, the moderator from Middlesex University is standing there to greet me; in fact the whole room is standing. His hand reaches out to shake my hand and he says; "Welcome Dr Riddiford, the examiners have awarded you a pass with no conditions and a number of commendations."

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Appendices

Appendix I: Nicole's Story

My colleague Nicole sent me this email after she had read an early draft of *Belonging in the Cosmos*, the chapter I contributed to the book *Indigenous Spiritualities at Work: Transforming the Spirit of Business Enterprise* edited by Chellie Spiller and Rachel Wolfgramm. I include Nicole's words because at the time I received them they were an important affirmation of the value of working with the Universe Story. Nicole highlights how it has taken time for a cosmic orientation to become personally meaningful.

Hi Jane,

It was great to read your chapter. It really landed with me and moved things on for me too. It helped ground the Universe Story/cosmos work in our everyday work for me a lot more as well. I feel that this is something that has developed a lot over this last year that I have not been here, especially through the Three Baskets of Knowledge story. Which again feels like a powerful development on I, We and the Planet - the way the Third Basket is a lot more explicit about the interconnectedness of all things, that it is not only about feeling connected to yourself, people around you, the planet, but rather about how the universe was built on these connections and we are a part of that - we are not only part of the land, a land that can have boundaries, but part of the wider universe, all part of the same thing. If there are no boundaries and if we are all made of the same matter, how can we not be connected? Somehow it is all feeling a lot more graspable to me.

Do you remember when you used to show that video to the generators 2-3 years ago about the beginning of the universe? It didn't quite land at the time and I felt that the way in wasn't quite right. I couldn't really relate to it. But now I am feeling super inspired and there is something very empowering about it. We are all part of the beautiful creation that is around us, the sunrises, oceans, mountains, etc. Once you realise this, once you stop feeling separate, how can you not want to be a positive force in this world? (I liked

your reference to not just asking what is leadership? but rather what is leadership for? - surely that's what it should be about!)

I really like this quote: "to rediscover meaning in the human venture we must first rediscover the personal in the cosmos" - I have previously always felt that the cosmos, big bang, creation of the universe and anything linked is 'science' and that it is something that is out there and that has nothing to do with my own life. It is a bit of a revelation to see it as something personal...

I think what has really helped with bringing it closer to me is the way you explain your journey with your NZ roots and the Maori story of the baskets and link to the land - the questions that this brings about and where that takes you, beyond the land... I think that there is something about myth and story that helps us connect in a natural way to bigger things. It reminded me of my time in South America and the time that I spent in the jungle living in a tiny village with an indigenous tribe for a few weeks. It was very powerful and very humbling; you could feel the spirit in all that was around you. It is about keeping that alive in London... I must remember...

Anyway just some thoughts but I would love to keep on talking about this and am dying to get more involved in the delivery of our work as well to keep on developing my own practice around all of this.

It was also great to read our conversation from last year and to see how we can build on our experiences and reflections. – Nicole van den Eijnde, Global Generation Youth Manager, December 16th, 2013

Appendix 2: Vero's Story

Vero is Global Generation's community chef whose email, sent to me during her visit to Palestine, I included in chapter 4. She is responsible for a range of educational programmes with young people, related to food. I have at times described Vero as Ethiopian and Portuguese. However Vero has made me aware that this label doesn't do justice to the full story of who she is. In an application to be part of a 'One World In Dialogue'⁶¹ programme that Rod and I have been facilitators for, Vero wrote,

⁶¹ www.oneworldindialogue.com

"The futility of the labels 'Ethiopian' and 'Portuguese' in describing lives and experiences, are apparent when just looking at my grandparents, but become even less representative of my parents, and me Our true 'identity' doesn't fit a label, but it can come to life in stories, by sharing words and experience, and in dialogue. This has guided me in life and in work.

Vero wrote to me after reading Chapter 5 of this thesis; 'Indigeneity'. She highlights the power of identifying with being indigenous to the cosmos, as opposed to, as she puts it "being tied to nations or cultures". Vero's words highlight what I hoped might be the wider cultural contribution of my very personal journey.

"As I ventured through Embercombe's woods, I thought about Adebayo Akomolafe's 'new activism', about my activism, and about my journey. Throughout my life I have had the opportunity to connect with the different peoples I shared and the many lands I called home. Ultimately, these experiences made me aware of the commonality underneath the layers of diversity amongst us humans. Unfortunately, I also grew up with the feeling that I was separate from nature.

I didn't grow up in the woods.

I felt nervous climbing trees.

I never slept in the 'wild'.

I didn't know how to start a fire.

I couldn't identify trees and flowers.

As I sat on a branch of a beautiful tree, of which I know not the name, I seemed to be yearning for another connection. I thought of the Maori story of the Three Baskets of Knowledge, shared to me by Jane, and how it triggered an important chapter in her own spiritual journey in the search of her connection to the land as the descendent of colonisers. As I looked over the picturesque hills of Devon, I thought of my connection to this land that had no meaning to me prior to my arrival, bears no resemblance to the lands my great grandparents knew too well, and that no member of my family has walked on. How could I be nurturing a connection to this land? Why am I learning to name and respect the characters that mark the British landscape,

while I know not those of my ancestors' lands? I suddenly felt so lost, so alone, and so out of place.

It was at that moment that I realised that I still have so much to learn and unlearn. I realised that though I claim to not see the separation amongst us, I still harbour some of those paradigms that allow for such separation to exist - entrenched in the way I see the world. I have found Home in many locations in four continents. My tent in Embercombe is home to me now - Why could I not initially see that I am not a fraud at all but that in fact I am nurturing my connection to home. A home I share with every being that has ever existed and will exist. I am coming to understand what is truly meant and felt by being indigenous to the planet, and thus, to the cosmos, as Jane's journey has shown her. And now, with that realisation, comes the calm. I'm no longer hungry for a sense of identity tied to nations or cultures. In this identity, I'm allowed and accepted exactly as I am - and as I am becoming.

I may momentarily fall back to my old ways of seeing and thinking of the world and I acknowledge that transformation is not usually a fast process. But there is no destination, no defined final product. Thus I am in transformation, as I always have been, and always will be.

I want the space and time to explore the implications of embodying and feeling this truth, as so much more than just a scientific fact. I want to find ways of sharing this with others. At this point, more than ever before, I am actively listening to stories from the land, and from people, with a strong desire to find companions on this journey, and to be changed by, and with, other beings around me - such as Hermione, one of the donkeys at Surrey Docks Farm, Tamar the Embercombe ewe who gave birth to a lamb in front of me, or the inspiring individuals in my 'One World in Dialogue' group.

Veronica (Vero) Lopes da Silva – May 2nd, 2016